

THE
COLLAPSE
OF
SEPARATISM
AMONG
FUNDAMENTAL
BAPTISTS

DAVID CLOUD

The Collapse of Separatism among Fundamental Baptists

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The river of apostasy is flowing powerfully, and all a church needs to do to capitulate is to stop paddling upstream. Giving up separation is easy; maintaining it is not.

I pray that many preachers will join me in the determination not to allow the collapse of biblical separation on our watches. - David Cloud

Introduction

This book is about the collapse of biblical separation among fundamental Baptist churches, the causes of this collapse, and how to avoid it at the local church level.

By way of introduction, I want to say that I am not personally concerned with Independent Baptist as a MOVEMENT. Though I talk about the movement in this report, what I am concerned about are individual New Testament churches. As we state in the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*, to use the term “church” for a movement or a denomination or association or for a group of churches in a region or nation is unscriptural. The church that is called the pillar and ground of the truth in 1 Timothy 3 is, in context, the church that has pastors and deacons. The New Testament is very precise in its use of the term “church.” When it is used for a group of churches in a region, such as Judea, Macedonia, Galatia, or Asia, the Bible uses the term in *plural* (Acts 9:31; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 19; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Galatians 1:2, 22; Revelation 1:4). The Bible speaks of the churchES of Galatia but never the church of Galatia. When the Bible says that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, it means that the New Testament church is the headquarters for gospel preaching and Christian discipleship; the divinely-instituted Bible training center; the ordaining and sending agency for world missions; and the God-ordained institution for the preservation of Scripture.

Second, I am not saying that all Independent Baptist churches used to be good and strong, but now they are going astray. I have never had the mindset that “if it is Independent Baptist it is right.” Far from it. The reality has long been true that many Independent Baptist churches are more man-centered cults than true New Testament churches. I have warned about this many times. (See, for example, the reports “Unquestioning Loyalty to Pastoral Leadership the Mark of a

Cult” and “What Is Independent Baptist?” at the Way of Life web site.)

Third, when I talk about a need to maintain “fundamentalism” I am simply using the term as a synonym for separatism. Fundamentalism as a movement was always deficient, in its inter-denominationalism, its division of truth into “essentials and non-essentials,” its ecclesiology, and other things. I am not interested in maintaining a fundamentalist movement; I am interested in maintaining fundamentalist Bible-believing churches.

Fourth, when I bemoan the collapse of separatism, I am not talking about an empty, Pharisaical externals-focused separatism. I am talking about true biblical separation that always begins and ends with a right relationship with Christ, a genuine ardor for truth, and a focus on the heart’s attitude and condition, rather than mere conformity to external rules. I have no sympathy with churches that think that God is pleased if someone dresses right, has a short haircut, carries a big King James Bible, and “wins souls” while walking in pride, abusing the flock of God, viewing pornography, committing adultery with choir members, fornicating with girls in the youth department, and molesting children. That this type of thing has been all too common within some circles of Independent Baptist churches, but it has nothing to do with true biblical separatism. (This is another reminder why we are not fighting for the preservation of a movement. As a *movement*, Independent Baptists don’t have a very good record.)

An Independent Baptist movement or a fundamentalist movement isn’t worth fighting for, but sound Independent Baptist churches are.

I Believe in Biblical Separation

Before we look at the details of the collapse of separatism within Independent Baptist churches, I want to give my testimony.

The reason that I am deeply concerned about the collapse of separatism is that I am both a Bible-believing Baptist and a separatist by conviction. I believe in separation. I am convinced that the “renunciation of separatism” is the renunciation of biblical Christianity. Separation is biblical. It is even an “essential” and a “fundamental” doctrine. Separation is not the gospel, but it is a divinely-ordained wall of spiritual protection against apostasy and the world. To reject “separatism” is to tear down this wall so that God’s people are no longer kept from the “good words and fair speeches” whereby heretics deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16:17-18) and no longer distanced from the siren call of the world.

I don’t hold to separation as some form of tradition from my fathers. I learned nothing about separation growing up in the Southern Baptist Convention. I was born a third generation Southern Baptist. My grandparents were Southern Baptists, my maternal grandfather being a head deacon. Aunts and uncles were (and are) deacons, song leaders, Sunday School teachers. My parents were faithful members. In my childhood and youth I participated in everything a Southern Baptist church had to offer: in the main services, Sunday School, Training Union, VBS, Sword drills, revival meetings, home coming and dinner on the ground, Southern Gospel singings, you name it. Separation was *not* part of the program. The power of God was also not part of the program. Though every kid in the church made a profession of faith at some point and was baptized and became a church member, I don’t recall even one kid that was serious about seeking and serving Christ in our church.

When rock & roll blasted on the scene in the 1950s and was given a massive boost in the 1960s, there was no effective resistance by the average SBC congregation, because they simply didn't believe in biblical separation. Instead of resisting the immodest/unisex rock fashions, the Southern Baptist churches went along for the ride, at first staying a couple of steps behind with "soft rock" and slightly Christianized versions of the world's fashions, but eventually moving into lock step with the world, and in some cases even trying to lead the way! Instead of separating from Hollywood's sensual fares, Southern Baptists were at the head of the movie ticket lines. There was no separation from the exceedingly worldly, humanistic-oriented public school system. It was in a deacon's garage where his son kept his 45-rpm record player where I first fell in love with rock music in 1960 in the sixth grade. The sensual rock dances at public school were attended by flocks of church kids. Because of the weak concept of salvation (defined as a mere profession rather than a biblical conversion) and the lack of serious spiritual discipleship and the church's refusal to preach and practice separation, I and all of my church kid friends were captured by the world. This was so predictable that it was considered normal! It was pretty much expected that young people would "sow their wild oats."

Thus, there is nothing in my church background that makes me look with nostalgia on a separatist stance.

I also was not attracted to separatism because of any sort of personal inclination in that direction. As a converted hippy I am naturally attracted to personal license rather than religious strictness.



After I was discharged from the Army as a Vietnam vet, I grew my hair long, sold drugs, hitchhiked across America twice, living in a tent or flop houses or rescue missions and working day jobs. I also crossed the continent twice in an automobile. I worked at a burger joint, a cold storage facility, a tile plant, and a fertilizer plant. I operated a tow motor in a lumber yard, loaded trucks with bags of cow feed, washed syrup off barges in New Orleans, and sold coconuts that I picked up off of golf courses in Florida. I was a carpenter's helper and an electrician's helper. I bought marijuana by the pound in south Florida and sold it by the lid (small packets) in central Florida. I went to jail and otherwise lived the rock & roll lifestyle to the hilt.

Any natural inclination I had right after conversion was to *keep* my long hair and rock music and to maintain broader ecclesiastical associations. The reason I didn't do those things was the clear commands of God's Word pertaining to separation, and it was learning to separate from the world and from false teaching that put me on and kept me on the right track in the Lord's will. Separation is necessary for true discipleship.

So I am not a separatist by tradition or personal inclination. I became a separatist by conviction after I was born again and began studying the Bible for myself.

I was led to Christ in the summer of 1973 by an old-line Pentecostal. He was a good Christian man who treated me with godly patience for the four or so days that we spent together traveling from near Miami, Florida, to Mexico, and back to Daytona Beach. When I met this man, I was a member of a Hindu meditation organization called the Self-Realization Fellowship Society and was steeped in New Age, 1960s rock & roll philosophy. I was a proud, foolish, foul-mouthed, alcohol and drug-abusing, cigarette smoking, “live as you very well please,” self-centered individual who thought he had God and life figured out but in reality didn’t know even the ABCs.

At the time we met, I was driving my car and he was riding a bicycle outside of Hollywood, Florida. I was just drifting, and he was on his way to Mexico to preach the gospel. I pulled alongside and offered him a ride, which he accepted. We put his bicycle in the trunk of the car and headed down the road. I asked him if he believed in God, and he replied that he did and pulled out a well-used pocket Bible. When I challenged him with my vain thinking, he rose to the challenge by quoting relevant Scripture. To my belief in reincarnation, he quoted Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men ONCE TO DIE, but after this the judgment.” To my belief that all roads lead to God, he quoted John 14:6, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” To my belief that the only thing that God requires is sincerity, he quoted Proverbs 14:6, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” To my belief that a man just needed to trust his heart, he quoted Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

That’s the way it went. He even allowed me to read things to him from my Hindu and New Age books, and he replied from Scripture. I know that I had with me Paramahansa Yogananda’s *Autobiography of a Guru* and *The Aquarian*

Gospel of Jesus the Christ, probably some Self-Realization Fellowship Society material, and I don't recall what else.

He showed me the relevant passages in his Bible and explained them, but he refused to philosophize with me. He just answered my questions and challenges with Scripture, and he was well equipped on that front. He told me that it was his practice to change Bibles from time to time so that he wouldn't grow dependent on knowing where a passage is located in only one certain Bible. He wanted to be able to pick up any Bible and find the relevant passages when dealing with people. His practical knowledge of Scripture impressed me so much that I was willing to travel with him, and at the end of that multi-day Bible class God had mercy on me, answering the prayers of my parents and godly maternal grandmother. The Lord turned on the light and I cast myself at Jesus' feet.

I immediately moved from the camp of Bible critic to that of staunch Bible believer. It happened in a moment by means of spiritual conversion, and that Pentecostal brother, to his credit, had taught me that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and the sole and final authority for faith and practice, and I was convinced of that from the moment I was saved. On our journey together we visited a large Christian bookstore so that he could purchase a King James Bible and a *Strong's Concordance* for me. As we walked through the store, he said, "You have to be very careful about Christian books, even the most popular ones. The Bible warns that there will be many false teachers. You have to test everything by the Bible. Many sincere men are wrong."

The day after I was converted, he went his way, riding his bicycle toward Mexico, and I have never seen or heard from him since as he was a drifter with no permanent residence. But by then I was a Bible believer, and I desperately did not want to be deceived again, so I began to study the Scripture earnestly. I had the Bible and the *Strong's Concordance* that he had given me and I literally wore them out that first year. I

looked up thousands of words in the dictionary part of the concordance. I filled up notebooks with topical studies. I wanted to get a solid foundation of Bible knowledge so that I could test everything by it and walk in the truth. I discovered Psalm 119 a few months after I was saved, and I imitated the Psalmist in my zeal for God's Word. With the Psalmist I prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." I held to Christ's promise in John 8:31-32 that if I continued in His Word I would know the truth.

I didn't know where to go to church, but I started visiting churches and testing them with Scripture as best I could, crying out to the Lord for wisdom. I never went back to the Southern Baptists because I had not seen spiritual zeal and reality there. I knew that was not where the Lord wanted me. I looked at Pentecostalism, attending a couple of churches and a Nicky Cruz crusade. I looked at Seventh-day Adventism and read some of their books. I looked at Herbert Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God. Finally I was invited to a fundamental Baptist church and felt at home there on the first visit, though it was the first time I had ever even heard of Independent Baptist. The pastor was a humble man and a serious Bible student and effective Bible teacher, specializing in expository book studies. I soaked up the teaching like a baby craving milk. I would not have dreamed of missing a preaching service or Bible study.

It was there that I began to learn about separation. The church was founded by a group of people who had come out of the large Southern Baptist congregation in that town, having become fed up with the compromise and spiritual lukewarmness. They were come outers, separatists! They took a stand against the deeply compromised Convention. They took a stand against the rotten Today's English Version that the Convention was promoting. They took a stand against rock & roll and sensual, unisex fashions. They took a stand against Hollywood. They took God's command not to be

conformed to the world seriously. They believed that the Bible's instruction to mark and avoid false teachers was to be obeyed even if that meant coming out of a denomination where your friends and relatives were comfortable.

How I thank the Lord for them and for their "fanatical" stand. Because they knew that salvation was a supernatural conversion and not a mere profession and they took true discipleship and biblical separation seriously, God used that church to change the lives and direction of many people, particularly young people. Several of us went out of there to a fundamental Baptist Bible college and on to serve the Lord in various capacities. The church only lasted a few years, because they couldn't keep a permanent pastor, but they had more fruit in that time than many churches have in a half century and more.

Yes, I believe in separation and I am deeply concerned about the next generation, if Jesus "tarries." I am concerned about my kids and grandkids and not yet born great grandkids. There are fewer and fewer churches that give more than lip service to separation. There are fewer and fewer churches that I can recommend with a good conscience. Will such churches still exist in 20-30-40 years so that God's people can find the spiritual protection they will need even more urgently than we do now?

You might be saying, "Well, God has promised to keep the churches." That is only true in the general sense that New Testament churches will not cease to exist in the world until the Rapture. Jesus' promise to missionary churches is, "... lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

This does not mean that sound churches will exist in your town or even in an entire region. Consider northern Italy. It was the bastion of the Waldenses who kept the light burning during the Dark Ages. They survived Rome's vicious persecutions, but they didn't survive lukewarmness and the neglect of separatism. There are still Waldensian churches in

the Italian Alps but they are spiritually dead, being more concerned about ecumenism and feminism and environmentalism and even homosexual rights than God's Word. Look at England. Many sound churches once existed there, but in many localities it is impossible to find even one today. In town after town, there is not a biblically-sound, spiritually-healthy church which is the pillar and ground of the truth and where lives can be changed to the glory of God. The same is true all across dark Europe.

There is no reason to think that this can't happen in America.

In fact, it *will* happen unless there are preachers who are willing to keep the light of full-orbed truth and separation from sin and error burning bright and who refuse to capitulate to the spirit of the times, and unless there are men and women who stand behind these preachers and encourage them to be strong instead of tempting them to become soft.

The river of apostasy is flowing powerfully, and all a church needs to do to capitulate is to stop paddling upstream. Giving up separation is easy; maintaining it is not.

I pray that many preachers will join me in the determination not to allow the collapse of biblical separation on our watches.

The Collapse of Separatism

We are witnessing a widespread collapse of separatism in Independent Baptist churches.

Since the old fundamentalist movement was captured by New Evangelicalism in the 1950s, biblical separatism has largely been an Independent Baptist phenomenon. Some Presbyterian and Bible and Brethren churches have maintained a separatist stance, but the number is very, very small compared to those of Independent Baptists. Thousands of IFBaptist churches were planted during the last half of the twentieth century, and many others came out of Southern Baptist, Conservative Baptist, etc., to fly the flag of separatism.

A dramatic change is taking place, though. The scenario that existed when I was saved in the early 1970s and joined an Independent Baptist church by personal conviction is radically different from the one that exists today.

What is happening now among fundamental Baptist churches is nearly a mirror image of what happened in the 1950s within fundamentalism-evangelicalism (the terms were synonymous when New Evangelicalism exploded on the scene). At its heart, it is the rejection of “separatism.”

When I was saved nearly 40 years ago, the major thing that distinguished fundamental Baptists from Southern Baptists was biblical separation, but that distinction is disappearing and there is a merging of philosophy. Since the early 1990s a rapidly growing number of Independent Baptist churches are no different in character than Southern Baptist, meaning they have given up on biblical separation, in practice if not in profession, and this change is reflected in the areas of music, dress, Bible versions, associations, the character of the youth ministries, the literature that is used, and other things.

From its inception, the hallmark of New Evangelicalism was the rejection of separation. Harold Ockenga, who claimed to have coined the term “neo-evangelicalism” in

1948, defined it as “A REJECTION OF SEPARATISM” (foreword to Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible*).

The New Evangelicalism aimed at a more positive and pragmatic philosophy as opposed to the “negativism” and “isolation” of fundamentalism.

In a 1947 speech at the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary, Ockenga said:

“We repudiate the ‘Come-outist’ movement ... We expect to be positive in our emphasis, except where error so exists that it is necessary for us to point it out in order to declare the truth” (Garth Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism*, 2008, p. 176).

Ockenga’s philosophy was to be positive except in very “major” matters. The definition of major and minor, essential and non-essential, has changed dramatically since he made that statement, and as we will see, many of Ockenga’s sons in the faith have reduced in value doctrines that he considered “essentials.” This always happens.



Harold Ockenga

Ockenga represented the changing mood of the sons of the old fundamentalists. The children were tired of exposing error and separating from compromised denominations and churches. They were tired of fighting. They were tired of being unpopular, tired of being outsiders, tired of not having enough “fun”! They wanted to broaden their associations and let their hair down a bit.

Since then New Evangelicalism has swept the globe. Today it is no exaggeration to say that those who call themselves evangelicals are New Evangelicals; the terms have become synonymous. Old-line evangelicals, with rare exceptions,

either have aligned with the fundamentalist movement or have adopted the New Evangelical philosophy. The evangelical movement today is the New Evangelical movement.

Ernest Pickering observed:

“Part of the current confusion regarding New Evangelicalism stems from the fact that there is now little difference between evangelicalism and New Evangelicalism. The principles of the original New Evangelicalism have become so universally accepted by those who refer to themselves as evangelicals that any distinctions which might have been made years ago are all but lost. It is no doubt true to state that ‘Ockenga’s designation of the new movement as New or Neo-Evangelical was abbreviated to Evangelical. ... Thus today we speak of this branch of conservative Christianity simply as the Evangelical movement” (*The Tragedy of Compromise*, p. 96).

What happened to evangelical churches in the 1950s is happening to fundamental Baptist churches today.

The doctrine of biblical separatism is being rejected at breathtaking speed. Consider some examples:

General Association of Regular Baptist Churches

The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) was staunchly separatist when I was saved in 1973. The first church I joined was pastored by the dean of one of their colleges. They were very conservative and separatistic. They had high standards of separation from the world with a biblical emphasis on genuine holiness rather than mere external conformity. They were dead set against New Evangelicalism. Some of the GARBC writings on separation, such as “A Limited Fellowship or a Limited Message” by David Nettleton, helped me greatly as a young Christian.

By the 1990s, though, the GARBC was gazing with affection on the New Evangelical path. Many GARBC preachers, such as Bill Rudd and Eric Strattan of Calvary

Baptist Church, Muskegon, Michigan, participated enthusiastically in the radically ecumenical Promise Keepers, which yoked together with Roman Catholic priests. Rudd was chairman of the GARBC's Council of Eighteen leadership committee.

By the 1990s the GARBC-approved Cornerstone College was partnering with New Evangelical and charismatic organizations through its Mission Network News. These organizations included Baptist World Alliance, Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network, Evangelism Explosion, the Jesus Film Project, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, Lutheran Bible Translators, and Youth for Christ International, which had long worked with Roman Catholics.

Richard Christen, who was elected speaker of the GARBC in 1996, said, "... instead of a wall around the GARBC, let's build a picket fence." That was a rejection of the old standard of separation, and the spaces within the GARBC's picket fence approach to separatism have grown ever wider.

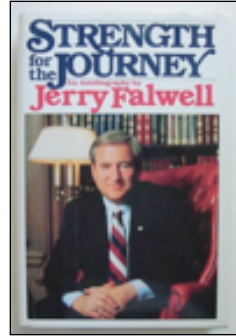
Association of Baptists for World Evangelism

The Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE) moved in the New Evangelical direction in the 1980s. Dr. Ralph Colas and Dr. Ernest Pickering resigned from the board of ABWE in the late 1980s because of its compromise. ABWE's well-known work in Bangladesh, led by the medical doctor Viggo Olson, traded biblical separatism for pragmatism and popularity and compromised the truth by yoking together with organizations such as Wheaton College and the wretchedly apostate United Bible Societies. In the 1990s Charles Ware, prominent ABWE board member, spoke at an ecumenical conference in Indianapolis with men representing Promise Keepers and Campus Crusade. William Commons, ABWE Director of Enlistment, praised *Choices for Tomorrow's Mission* by David Hesselgrave of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. This book endorsed Billy Graham-style ecumenical evangelism.

Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty Baptist College

Founded in 1954, Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia, pastored by Jerry Falwell, was an “old fashioned” fundamental Baptist church, but radical changes were observed in the 1980s.

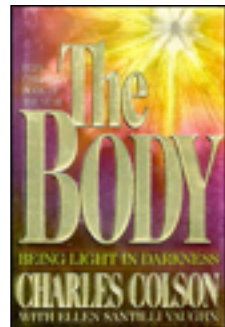
It was then that Falwell started supporting contemporary Christian music. Speaking at Word of Life in New York Falwell said: “Other than Heavy Metal and vulgar lyrics, it’s all a matter of taste and has nothing to do with Christianity.”



It was in the 1980s that Falwell formed the Moral Majority political action group, which was eventually composed of at least 30% Roman Catholics. In his 1987 autobiography, *Strength for the Journey*, Falwell called them “my Catholic brothers and sisters” (p. 371).

In 1987, Falwell took over the leadership of the sleazy charismatic PTL ministry, claiming that it was “certainly worth saving” (*Strength for the Journey*, p. 442).

In 1992, Falwell endorsed Chuck Colson’s book *The Body*, which urged evangelicals to join forces with Roman Catholics and charismatics and which considered the Roman Catholic Church as a part of the “body of Christ.”



In 1995, Falwell hosted a Promise Keepers (PK) conference. That same year a Catholic priest spoke at a PK meeting in Plainview, Texas. One of the PK directors was a Roman Catholic.

Jerry Falwell's
NATIONAL Liberty
JOURNAL
National in Scope With a Vision for the World

SHAME AT DISNEY:
 Publisher Jerry Falwell lambasts rapid moral decay of the Walt Disney Company under Chairman Michael Eisner. **PAGE 2**



Three Billy Grahams at Liberty

Three generations of Billy Grahams will play important roles in Liberty University's 1997 Commencement Exercises in May.

Dr. Billy Graham, the most revered and influential Christian leader of the 20th Century, will bring the commencement address on Saturday, May 2.

Dr. Graham's son, Franklin, president of Samaritan's Purse and board member of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, with his wife Jane and family, will offer the commencement prayer. (Franklin was Liberty's 1996 commencement speaker.)

And Franklin's son, Will, will be among Liberty's approximately 1,200 graduates.

In addition, Dr. Graham's wife, Anne, the commencement emcee, will attend the commencement services.

Franklin and Jane have another son, Eric, completing his freshman year at Liberty University.

Liberty is proud to have this great American family in attendance at this very special event.

Servicemaster Chairman C. William Folted will bring the 1997 commencement address on Friday evening, May 2.

The commencement festivities begin at 9:00 am (ET) and all persons planning to attend are advised to arrive



WILLIAM FRANKLIN GRAHAM, JR.



WILLIAM FRANKLIN GRAHAM, III



WILLIAM FRANKLIN GRAHAM, IV

SPECIAL REPORT
Ellen Comes Out

For months last year, rumors ran rampant in Hollywood regarding the possible announcement of lesbianism by the title character of ABC's *Ellen* sitcom.

The star of the series, Ellen DeGeneres, had herself been rumored to be lesbian for several years, but she had never addressed the growing speculation. The choice to remain in the same closet as her television character, Ellen Morgan. (See *The Real Ellen Comes Out* this page 8 for details on DeGeneres' high profile, lesbian "pride.")

Last year, homosexual groups from around the country decided to "take" the matter into their own hands, mounting a within-campaign to demand ABC executives and Walt Disney officials (ABC's parent company) allow *Ellen* to "come out."

ABC execs were a bit nervous about the prospect of a homosexual lead character since they lost an estimated \$100 million in 1989 when two homosexual men appeared to bed together on the drama *Doogie Howser, M.D.*

Then, on September 28, 1996, TV Guide reported that the only thing Ellen Morgan wanted in her closet was her clothes. The character of Ellen Morgan, we learned, would announce her lesbianism to a co-worker, to be played by talk-show host Oprah Winfrey.

This landmark episode is scheduled to air on April 30.

The announcement spurred *National Liberty Journal's* Publisher Jerry Falwell to leap into the fray to represent the voice of pro-familial Americans who are concerned that television is out of control in its portrayal of homosexual America and its disrespectful treatment of Christians. It should be noted that Ellen Morgan becomes the twenty-seventh homosexual character on network television this year, about the first main character. The airwaves have been deluged with gay wedding

Jerry Falwell's paper announcing Billy Graham's commencement speech at Liberty University. Franklin Graham gave the commencement prayer. William Franklin Graham, IV, graduated that year, and Franklin Graham's son Roy was still a student.

In October 1995, Falwell praised Billy Graham for his "long and faithful ministry" and did not have one word of warning for Graham's great compromise, his yoking together with Rome, his turning over of "converts" to Roman Catholic and modernistic Protestant churches, his praise of blaspheming modernists, etc. In 1997, Billy Graham was the commencement speaker at Liberty University.

In April 1996, hard rocking dc Talk drew the largest concert crowd in the history of Falwell's Liberty University.

In 1996, Falwell joined the SBC, and in 1999 Liberty University was formally approved as an SBC school.

By 1997, Falwell was yoked with the charismatic Integrity Music to train contemporary worship leaders at Liberty.

When Catholic Cardinal John O’Conner died in May 2000, Falwell praised him: “I am grateful that John O’Connor--a man of courageous faith--had such a profound influence on the Catholic Church through his fifty-five years of ministry. I pray that another pro-life, pro-family minister can be found to fill his significant and substantial shoes.” Falwell said nothing about the fact that O’Conner’s false gospel has sent multitudes to eternal hell. When the Apostle Paul was asked what he thought of those who preach a false gospel, his reply was quite different from Falwell’s. Paul said, “Let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8-9).

In 2001 Falwell identified himself as a “contemporary fundamentalist,” defined as “conservative in doctrine, moderate in attitude, progressive in methodology, and liberal in spirit.”

Baptist Bible Fellowship International

The Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) capitulated to the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s and the men with separatist convictions left the fellowship.

I first became aware of the rejection of separatism on the part of BBFI men when I wrote reports warning about Promise Keeper’s ecumenism

Fellowship International (BBFI)

The clipping is from the National Liberty Journal, dated August 1998. The main headline is "The Promise Keepers phenomenon" by Dr. Billy Hamm, Missouri State Baptist Temple, Denver, Colorado. The article discusses the BBFI's stance on ecumenism and the role of Promise Keepers. It mentions that the BBFI has been criticized for its ecumenism and that Promise Keepers have been accused of being a "bridge" between the BBFI and the broader evangelical community. The article also mentions that the BBFI has been accused of being a "bridge" between the BBFI and the broader evangelical community.

A positive report on Promise Keepers by BBFI leader Billy Hamm in Jerry Falwell’s paper, the National Liberty Journal

and received scathing rebukes from some BBFI preachers and Bible college students.

The writing was on the wall by 2002, when the BBFI annual conference was held at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Fairfax, Virginia. The music was led by a contemporary



“worship team” composed of four women. Around that time the church dropped the “King James Only” clause from the by-laws and the New Living Translation and other corrupt versions are now used from the pulpit. The pastor sent out a letter to members saying, “With regard to dress and modesty issues, we enforce NO RULE on our folks. ... apparel issues are really of no concern to us.” The church’s Skate Night, which was sponsored by secular skateboarding companies, featured

Bethlehem Baptist Church's cool youth pastor

“throbbing Christian rock.” The church’s youth pastor had an earring and promoted the rock band P.O.D.

In 2003, the BBFI in the Philippines invited the country’s Roman Catholic president to speak at an evangelism conference. This is the new non-separatist BBFI.

Landmark Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

Landmark Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, used to be an “old-fashioned” Baptist church with high standards of music and dress and stance against the modern versions.

In the 1990s the church took a turn away from its roots and at the heart of this change was music. In 1996, the church brought in a Campus Crusade band playing “high energy ‘50s and ‘60s rock and roll.”

In 2001, Mat Holman became the pastor. The church's web site said, "Being a firm believer that church should be fun and on the edge, Matt puts all his energy into making Landmark a place where everyone belongs."

The church now features a teen ministry called EnterRuption. "The purpose of EnterRuption is to create a relevant environment for students to bring their friends. We utilize a live band (secular and Christian music), dramas, skits and a relevant message."

The pop group Jump5 performed at Landmark Baptist on Dec. 6, 2003. "The music of the Nashville-based group is thoroughly modern pop, high-spirited and 100% fun."

Akron Baptist Temple, Akron, Ohio

Akron Baptist Temple was founded in 1935 by Dallas Billington. From the 1940s to the 1960s it had one of the largest Sunday morning crowds in the nation. In September 1960, during a Sunday School campaign, it averaged 6,000 in attendance, and was dubbed "the World's Largest Sunday School" by Elmer Towns. In those days it was a typical Independent Baptist church, very conservative in music and dress, committed to the King James Bible, and aggressive in evangelism.

Upon the death of Dallas Billington in 1972, his son Charles assumed the pastorate. In 1996, Dallas' grandson Dallas R. Billington became pastor, and took the church in a contemporary direction.

Today, Akron Baptist Temple is an emerging church with a "traditional service" called The Temple and a raunchy contemporary service called The Bridge. The church offers a smorgasbord of worship "experiences." It's all about my tastes and my choices. In The Bridge a loud rock & roll band plays 7/11 (seven words sung 11 times) contemporary worship music in a darkened auditorium. The service is advertised as "creating an environment where people who are seeking God,

can do so in a non-threatening, comfortable way.” It is oriented toward “experiencing God.”

It’s amazing how all of these “non-traditional, think outside the box” churches use exactly the same language and exactly the same type of music and exactly the same philosophy and exactly the same clothing and tattoos and piercings. There is, in fact, less difference between them than there is between “traditional” churches. They aren’t thinking outside the box. They are merely fitting into the contemporary box, which someone else invented and into which they gleefully stuff themselves. They think of themselves as following the beat of a different drummer, but they are actually walking lockstep to the rhythm of this world and the end-time spirit.

New Testament Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

New Testament Baptist Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, used to be a fundamental Baptist church. Pastor Dino Pedrone was a regular speaker at Highland Park Baptist Church when I was a student at Tennessee Temple in the 1970s, and he was a regular speaker at Southwide Baptist Fellowship conferences. In those days the church believed in biblical separatism, used only the King James Bible and sacred music, had dress standards, stood against rock & roll. But everything’s changed now.

Along the way the church was renamed The Gathering Place. Today it promotes the watching of R-rated movies, recommends books by emerging church leaders who reject the infallibility of the Bible, such as Chris Seay, and feeds its youth a steady diet of rock & roll entertainment. The church’s youth program, called YouthForce Dade, describes itself on the church web site as follows:

“Rock the Universe, All-Niters, Ski Trips, Summer Camps, Chubby Bunny, Water Balloons, Break dancing, WWE Wrestling, The Book Of Ross, Worship, Bible Study, Community, Little Debbie Snack Cakes, Madden, X-Box

360, LEE ADMIRAL MAJORS!, Eating Dog Food, Samurai Swords, Paintball, Skillet, Shipwrecked, Videos, Ultimate Frisbee, Man Hunt, And Much More!”

Notice that they even have a dab of Bible teaching in the midst of the carnal fun.

The church’s 2011 Imagine Women of Faith conference featured ecumenical charismatic rockers such as Amy Grant, Mary Mary, Sandi Patty, and Sheila Walsh.

Jeff Royal, who lives in south Florida, says, “NTBC was once a fundamental church, but obviously it has changed. In my view the change began about ten years ago by allowing CCM to be integrated into the services. I’ve watched it over the years. It’s sad because that’s two churches I’ve personally known to have taken this dangerous path” (e-mail, January 19, 2010).

Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan

Another example of the collapse of separatism is Temple Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan. This church was pastored by J. Frank Norris from 1935 to 1950 and by G. Beauchamp Vick from 1950 to 1975. In past days, it was a conservative fundamental Baptist church that eschewed ecumenism, preached strong Bible doctrine, and promoted holy living and separation from the world. It used only the King James Bible. Preaching in 1975 at the 25th anniversary of the founding of the BBFI, G.B. Vick said:

“It’s become fashionable to use many different versions of the Bible today. ... Listen! This King James Version, our English Bible, the Bible of our fathers and mothers, is the one that has come floating down to us upon the blood of Christian martyrs, our forefathers. It has been, I say, the one text of the Baptist Bible College, and it will be as long as I have anything to do with this school! [loud amens and applause] ... Let’s stick to the old Book.”

In those days at Temple Baptist Church it was the old Book and the old Paths, but that changed in the 1990s when the church got a cool new pastor named Brad Powell.

The church's music today is described at its web site as follows: "The Praise Bands consist of the piano, synthesizer, acoustic and electric guitar, bass guitar, and drums."

The church began having CCM concerts in the early 1990s, starting out with the softer rock groups. In September 1993, for example, they had Steve Camp. By October 1996, they featured Michael Card, who is radically ecumenical and works closely with Roman Catholic John Michael Talbot (who prays to Mary).

In February 2000, Temple Baptist changed its name to Northridge Church of Plymouth, Michigan.

The music style of the CCM groups at Northridge has gotten progressively harder. In September 2003, the church hosted Sonic Flood. Then they brought in Darlene Zschech (pronounced "check"), a female pastor who promotes radical ecumenism even with the Roman Catholic Church and unscriptural charismatic doctrines and practices.

Brad Powell associates with and recommends Rick Warren and Bill Hybels.

Southside Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina

This church was founded in September 1946. From 1965 to 1996 it was pastored by Walt Handford. His wife Elizabeth is one of the daughters of the famous fundamentalist preacher John R. Rice, founder of the *Sword of the Lord*, and it was an old-fashioned fundamental Baptist church until the 1990s.

That is when *Joyful Woman* magazine, for which Elizabeth Rice Handford was editorial consultant, began to feature ecumenical personalities such as James Dobson and Elisabeth Elliot, both of whom have close affiliations with the Roman Catholic Church.

In September 1993, the church hosted Ray Boltz for a CCM concert.

That same year Southside gave up the King James Bible in favor of the NIV. In support of this move, the speaker at Southside for the Sunday evening service, September 12, 1993, was Kenneth Barker, chairman of the New International Version translation committee.

By 1994, the church had a staff member who was also employed by the extremely ecumenical Campus Crusade for Christ. In an interview with *Charisma* magazine in 2001, Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright described his philosophy: “I have felt that God led me many years ago to build bridges. I’m a Presbyterian . . . and yet I work with everybody who loves Jesus, whether they be charismatic or Catholic, Orthodox or mainliners. . . . I’m not an evangelical. I’m not a fundamentalist.”

In 1996, Charles Boyd became pastor of Southside. He is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, both of which are New Evangelical to the core. Under his direction, Southside changed its name to Southside Fellowship.

Highland Park Baptist Church and Tennessee Temple

Highland Park Baptist Church, home of Tennessee Temple University, which came out of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1940s and was a prominent fundamental Baptist institution for half a century, was rocking out by the first decade of the 21st century.

In April of 2005 the church and school hosted a Christian rock concert featuring Bebo Norman, Fernando Ortega, and Sara Groves. It was held in Highland Park’s main auditorium. All three of these mainstream CCM musicians are enemies of biblical separatism. Ortega, for example, is an Episcopalian who has appeared at Billy Graham Crusades and Promise

Keepers conferences. Bebo Norman has toured with Amy Grant.

The October 29, 2005, issue of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* featured a picture of Tennessee Temple University students “worshipping” to contemporary rock music during a Wednesday evening service. TTU president Danny Lovett said, “Each generation has different styles of music, and what churches have to realize is that we’ve got to meet those younger generations’ needs.”



Toddiefunk

In April 2006, the school’s College Days, when prospective students visit the campus, featured two Christian rockers, Toddiefunk and the Electric Church and Warren Barfield. Toddiefunk is the bass player for Toby Mac, formerly with DC Talk. Electric Church’s album *Ready or Not* featured “Holy Ghost Thang,” “Dance Floor,” “Naked,” and “Crazy.”

Tennessee Temple was one of the sponsors of the “Winter Jam Tour 2007,” which featured Christian rockers such as Jeremy Camp, Steven Curtis Chapman, Sanctus Real, and Hawk Nelson. Sanctus Real lead guitarist Chris Rohman says: “On the tours we’ve been lucky to be part of, the kids are really into the rockin’ songs ... every night on that tour kids were just screaming along to every word of every song.” Can you imagine the apostle Paul promoting this type of worldly thing? Matt Hammitt of Sanctus Real participated in the 2003 tour of the *!Hero* rock opera, which depicts Jesus as a cool black man. In *!Hero*, the Last Supper is a barbecue party and ‘Jesus’ is crucified on a city street sign. Sanctus Real and Steven Curtis Chapman played a concert in 2003 at St. Mary Seminary sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of

Cleveland, Ohio. Retired Catholic bishop Anthony Pilla celebrated Mass at the event. Chapman told the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* that it's "a good thing" that "the Catholic Church is showing a greater openness to contemporary Christian music" (*Plain Dealer*, Aug. 7, 2006).

By 2008, Highland Park Baptist Church had gone back into the Southern Baptist Convention.

A couple of years earlier Tennessee Temple brought in emerging church leader Dallas Willard for the Spring Lecture Series. Willard believes that "it is possible for someone who does not know Jesus to be saved" ("Apologetics in Action," *Cutting Edge* magazine, Winter 2001).

He says, "Jesus and his words have never belonged to the categories of dogma or law, and to read them as if they did is simply to miss the point" (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. xiii). Willard is confused about salvation. He says, "Why is it that we look upon salvation as a moment that began our religious life instead of the daily life we receive from God" (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*). He rejects the gospel of Christ's blood atonement (*The Divine*



Dallas Willard

Conspiracy, pp. 44, 49). In his book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, which promotes Roman Catholic-style contemplative mysticism, Willard includes the endorsement of Sue Monk Kidd, a New Age "goddess." (See "From Southern Baptist to Goddess Worship" at the Way of Life web site.) Willard promotes the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton and an assortment of heresy-laden mystic "saints." Willard claims that God is not concerned about doctrinal purity. In fact, he says that God loves theologians of all types.

Southwide Baptist Fellowship

Southwide Baptist Fellowship, one of the largest independent Baptist networks, was also rocking out by the mid-2000s and had begun to capitulate to the New Evangelical philosophy. Many of the speakers who preached at Southwide in October 2003 were from churches with contemporary rock worship services. Bo Moore, the moderator of Southwide that year, is the pastor of Heritage Baptist Church of Kentwood, Michigan, which advertised itself at that time as “a progressive independent Baptist



Heritage Baptist Church's rockin' drummer providing "energy" for their contemporary worship

church” with a “High Impact” Sunday evening service consisting of “praise and worship choruses led by our worship leader, praise team and band.” Another Southwide speaker that year, Johnny Hunt, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Georgia, a rocking Southern Baptist congregation that decidedly rejects “separatism.” A man wrote to me in 2003 and testified, “I visited there [Hunt’s church] and got up and left because of the wild, party-like atmosphere in their ‘worship’ service.”

By 2007, the number of Southern Baptist speakers at Southwide equaled the number of Independent Baptists, and two contemporary musicians provided music, including one who had appeared on the Crystal Cathedral television program with Robert Schuller (Don Boys, “Rise and Fall of Southwide,” CSTNews.com, May 16, 2007).

Cedarville University

Cedarville University (formerly Cedarville Baptist College) capitulated to the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s. In January 2001 the ecumenical charismatic Jim Cymbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle was a featured speaker. When I warned about this in *O Timothy* magazine, I received a deluge of angry, mocking correspondence from Cedarville students. Many espoused the ecumenical doctrine. Consider a couple of examples:

“I agree that the charismatic movement is wrong in some large doctrinal issues, but we are still responsible to be unified in the Body of Christ.”

“What all Christianity lacks today is UNITY. ... I believe that if people want to believe or not believe something that is their judgment. ... [signed] Proud to be a Cedarville student.”

Many Cedarville students reproved me for speaking against Christian rock. For example, one student wrote,

“The fact that the choir at his [Cymbala’s] church sings what you would call ‘contemporary and jazzy’ music proves my theory that you must be a narrow-minded, brain-washed backwoods Baptist. It ----- me off [the Cedarville student used a profanity here] whenever anybody condemns a style of music simply because it is anything other than 18th century hymns or classical. There is no such thing as bad ‘music.’”

Another wrote,

“You can spend your whole life debating over issues as such, but until you receive the gift of genuine love in your heart, you’ll never understand or gain anything.”

(The communications I received in 2011 from students at West Coast Baptist College in response to my warnings about that school’s adaptation of CCM reminded me of those I had received a decade earlier from Cedarville students.)

In 2002, Cedarville was approved by the Southern Baptist Convention. The Baptist Press (Jan. 3, 2002) said that “Cedarville is one of the top feeder schools for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.” Cedarville President Paul Dixon “voiced excitement” for a “growing relationship with Southern Baptists.” Jack Kwok, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Ohio praised Cedarville and recommended the school to “all Southern Baptists,” observing that they “embrace our theology, our polity and our missiology.”



In October 2002, CCM musician Michael Card performed at Cedarville. Card has produced an album jointly with Roman Catholic John Michael Talbot, who prays to Mary and practices yoga. Card and Talbot perform ecumenical concerts together at Catholic and Protestant churches.

Card led the “worship” for “an Evening of Friendship” with Mormons in Salt Lake City in March 2011. On that occasion he said that he “doesn’t see Mormonism and evangelical Christianity as opposed to each other; they are more like the two ends of a long thread -- part of the same thing” (*Deseret Morning News*, Nov. 16, 2004). He also said, “The older I get, I guess the more I want to integrate everything. I think it’s more important to be faithful than right.” Michael Card represents the new non-separatist Cedarville.

Joyful Woman magazine

Joyful Woman, a magazine for women published by the daughters of the late fundamentalist evangelist John R. Rice, adopted the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s. Joy Rice Martin is the editor; two other Rice daughters, Jessie Sandberg and Joanna Rice, are contributing editors; and Elizabeth Rice Handford is the editorial consultant.

The July-August 1991 issue contained a full-page ad for Campus Crusade's Here's Life Publishers, including the offer of a book entitled *Freeing Your Mind from Memories That Bind*. Campus Crusade was radically ecumenical since its inception and has had Roman Catholic staff members.



The Jan.-Feb. 1992 issue of *Joyful Woman* contained a full page ad for the ecumenical World Vision, as well as an advertisement for the New International Version. World Vision works closely with the Roman Catholic Church in many parts of the world.

The May-June 1994 issue of *Joyful Woman* featured James and Shirley Dobson on the front cover. Fifteen years earlier, Focus on the Family's vice president Rolf Zettersten said he and his co-workers "cast their theological distinctives aside in order to achieve a common objective--to help families" (*Focus on the Family*, December 1989). Dobson has had a close and uncritical relationship with Roman Catholicism. The November 1989 issue of Focus on the Family's *Clubhouse* magazine featured Mother Teresa. In November 2000, Dobson participated in a conference in Rome hosted by the pope's Pontifical Council for the Family and by the Acton Institute, a Roman Catholic organization. Dobson also met with Pope John Paul II. The September 1990

issue of *New Covenant*, a Catholic charismatic magazine, praised Focus on the Family and featured a smiling Dobson on the cover, while another of the articles promoted prayers to Mary.

The Joyful Woman Jubilee in October 1994 featured the ecumenical Elisabeth Elliot as a speaker. In July 1989 Elliot spoke at the Roman Catholic Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, a hotbed of Roman Catholic-Charismatic confusion.



Franciscan University holds an annual conference to exalt the blasphemous Catholic dogmas that Mary is the immaculately conceived Queen of Heaven and advocate of God's people. In 1998, Elliot spoke at Notre Dame (Our Mother) University. When her brother converted to the Roman Catholic Church, Elliot said it is

acceptable to be a Catholic and to celebrate the Catholic mass. She said this during a question-answer session at a gathering at the Wisconsin Expo Center on September 6, 1997, sponsored by WVCY radio in Milwaukee.

Trinity Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida

Trinity Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida is another example of a former separatist Baptist church that is moving rapidly into the contemporary, emerging sphere. The church is pastored by Tom Messer.

In 2005 the church began holding “blended” song services. A friend sent the following report that year:

“I wanted to share some sad information with you. As I visited the Trinity Baptist website, I found them doing what Dan Lucarini refers to as ‘blended’ song services. Bryant Shipton is referred to as the ‘worship pastor.’ The two songs that I heard were ‘Lord Reign in Me’ by Brenton Brown of the Vineyard U.K. and ‘Call on Jesus’ by Nicole C. Mullen.

Over the last two Sundays they have used 'Rise Up and Praise Him' by Paul Balouche, 'I Am friend of God' by the non-Trinitarian Philips, Craig and Dean, and 'Shout to the Lord' by the charismatic Darlene Zschech. When you see them using these radically ecumenical groups and musicians, it is obvious that they are headed away from their former position."

A move toward contemporary worship music is not a mere change in music; it is accompanied by a change in a church's overall philosophy, and that has become very evident at Trinity Baptist Church as time as passed.

In 1996, a mere nine years earlier, Southwide Baptist Fellowship, meeting at Trinity, published a statement warning against Promise Keepers and its "unholy music." How quickly things have changed! Today Trinity uses that very music, but if it was unholy in 1996 it is unholy today.

Jerry Falwell spoke at the 51st Southwide Baptist Fellowship annual meeting, October 2006, at Trinity Baptist Church. The music was led by Mike Speck, whose book "Everlasting Praise" features songs that are on the CCLI list of top 25 contemporary "praise and worship" songs in America, including "Shout to the Lord" by the radical ecumenist and charismatic rocker/female pastor Darlene Zschech.

Jerry Falwell represented Trinity's new direction and philosophy. In February 1986 he told Christianity Today that Catholics made up the largest constituency (30%) of his Moral Majority organization, and in his autobiography *Strength for the Journey*, he referred to the "Catholic brothers and sisters in the Moral Majority" (p. 371). Falwell endorsed Chuck Colson's 1992 book, *The Body*, which urged evangelicals to join forces with Roman Catholics and charismatics. Colson said, "...the body of Christ, in all its diversity, is created with Baptist feet, charismatic hands, and Catholic ears--all with their eyes on Jesus" (*World*, Nov. 14, 1992).

Trinity Baptist Church's September 2010 Church Life Conference featured a video message from Southern Baptist bridge builder and rock & roll lover Ed Stetzer, head of the SBC's LifeWay research department.

Stetzer holds to the "in non-essentials liberty" philosophy, despises separatism, and associates with pretty much anybody and everybody. He is a bridge to the "broader church" that is filled to the brim today with ancient and end-times heresies (such as baptismal regeneration, popery, Mariolatry, sacramentalism, anti-Trinitarianism, universalism, Catholic contemplative mysticism, kingdom now reconstructionism, charismaticism, theistic evolution, fallible inspiration of Scripture, panentheism, the non-judgmental male/female "Shack" god, and Christian homosexuality).

Stetzer is closely affiliated with Mark Driscoll, who is "culturally liberal" (e.g., ushering in the New Year through champaign dance parties), hates the doctrine of the pre-tribulational Rapture, and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among other things. Stetzer is affiliated with fellow Southern Baptist Rick Warren, who in turn is closely affiliated with many New Agers and universalists (e.g., Tony Blair, Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, and Leonard Sweet) and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism. Stetzer is affiliated with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, who in turn is affiliated with the papacy, praises the pope, and has turned thousands of "converts" over to the Catholic Church.

By affiliating with bridge builder Ed Stetzer, Independent Baptist pastor Tom Messer is facilitating a bridge between his people and the "broader church," and he will be accountable to God for those who cross that bridge and become deceived by the wiles of the devil.

The lines are being erased; the edges blurred; because biblical separation and clear reproof of error and compromise is taking a back seat to church growth, evangelism, and

missions, all of which are fundamental to the cause of Christ, but none of which are acceptable excuses for disobeying God's Word.

Trinity Baptist Church released its first full-blown Christian rock album in May 2011 by the in-house praise & worship band ChurchLife. The songs were written by members of the church and a faculty member of Trinity Baptist College (http://www.tbc.edu/pages/page.asp?page_id=125112).

Trinity's worship leader, Jason Cross, illustrates the danger of messing with contemporary music. It puts the church into association with treacherous spiritual waters filled with ancient and end-time heresies, as we have documented in *The Transformational Power of Contemporary Praise Music* and *The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music*, which are available in DVD and eVideo formats from www.wayoflifeorg.

Cross links to men and churches and organizations such as Mark Driscoll, Getty Music, Stuart Townend, Tim Hughes, Tommy Walker, Ed Stetzer Matt Redman, Saddleback Church, Willowcreek, The Brooklyn Tabernacle, Granger Community Church, and Ancient Future Worship.

We have dealt with the spiritual/doctrinal dangers represented by these in books such as *The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians* and *What Is the Emerging Church?*

Consider Granger Community Church, which is recommended by Jason Cross through his prominent link to their web site. This church in Granger, Indiana, featured Beatles music as their 2007 Christmas theme. Pastor Tim Stevens said: "With Across the Universe currently in the theaters and the new Beatles-themed Cirque du Soleil show in Vegas called Love, the Beatles are as hot as ever. Using the music of the Beatles we will be telling the Christmas story all December. And we've been getting great feedback from music lovers of all generations" (<http://www.leadingsmart.com/>

leadingsmart/2007/11/let-it-bechrist.html/). They advertised it as “Let it Be...Christmas -- A Story Told by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, George and Ringo.” Granger Community Church is engaged in wretched spiritual adultery and walks in blatant, presumptuous disobedience to James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15-16.

Trinity Baptist Church has built bridges to dangerous waters and the ensuing changes are occurring with breathtaking speed.

Northland Baptist College

In February 2011 we received the following information from Pastor Steve Rogers, Grace Baptist Church, Oxford, Pennsylvania:

The influence of New Evangelicalism is spreading like wild fire among many denominations, churches, and movements. The “fundamental” movement is no exception. Fundamentalism was supposed to be a movement based on separation, and the “movement” began many colleges and seminaries to train believers to stand against modernism and liberalism. It is evident that many of these “fundamental” colleges are now moving to a New Evangelical position, as the next generation of leaders take over. One such example is Northland International University, located in Dunbar, WI. My wife is a graduate, and we have observed the slow but consistent change of direction at Northland. Under the new leadership of President Matt Olson, the school recently changed it’s name from Northland Baptist Bible College to the more generic Northland International University. The previous name clearly identified Northland from New Evangelical and secular colleges, the new name bears not one hint of a separatist, Baptist college. When alumni spoke up with concerns about a change towards New Evangelicalism, they were assured that nothing had changed. In November of 2010, NIU President Matt Olson issued an open letter to pastors and alumni regarding more changes at Northland.

(<http://www.sharperiron.org/article/open-letter-from-dr-matt-olson-of-northland-international-university>) After justifying these new upgrades to Northland, by stating he and the staff had fasted and prayed for 40 days, Olson laid out three new changes.

The first change was the removal of the demerit system at Northland, which will now be replaced with “the Way of Discipleship”, which in Olson’s mind, focuses on a more “grace” oriented approach. This is the “grace” that Chuck Swindoll and other New Evangelicals have been redefining for years, which says rules and standards are evil and preaches grace as a license to live like the world. I’m sure carnal, worldly students will love this approach, much like they do at Liberty and Cedarville.

The second change was in NIU’s music department. In order to “prepare students for worship and music globally,” NIU is changing their music on a “missional level.” These changes are needed to, as Olson states, “take the Gospel where it has not been proclaimed.” There are two glaring problems with this reason of compromise. First, NIU is not commissioned to take the Gospel anywhere, that authority and ordination was given to churches, not para-church “ministries”! Secondly, music is not the God-chosen method of evangelizing the world, preaching is! The head of NIU’s music department, Kevin Suiter, resigned after this change was announced. Once again, a compromise in music, is always an indication of movement toward New Evangelicalism.

The third, and most frightening change, was in regard to NIU’s chapel speakers and faculty. In October of 2010, Rick Holland, the Executive Pastor at Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, where John MacArthur is senior pastor, spoke in Northland’s chapel. Holland heads up the ecumenical “Resolved” conferences, where charismatics and CCM are glorified. (www.resolved.org) The website features MacArthur on a rock-concert-like stage, with drums in the background, speaking in faded jeans and untucked shirt, in classic New Evangelical worldliness. MacArthur is well

known for his Calvinistic teachings, Lordship salvation, and downplaying the importance of the blood of Christ. Olson defended the move, by explaining after a face to face meeting between MacArthur and NIU administration, they “agreed on the most substantial issues of life and ministry.”

Olson also stated that southern Baptist professor Bruce Ware would be teaching graduate level courses at NIU, because of his expertise and experience. The compromise within the SBC is well-documented and remains strong to this day.

These changes at Northland and other “fundamental” parachurch institutions should be known and warned against by pastors and local churches. Pastors and parents must stop blindly sending their children to their alma mater out of loyalty to men, and become vigilant for the truth! (Steve Rogers, pastorsteverogers@gmail.com).

The following is excerpted and slightly modified from “Is Northland Opposed,” Lou Martuneac, In Defense of the Gospel, Aug. 19, 2012:

“Beginning in October 2010 In Defense of the Gospel (IDOTG) has exposed and addressed a number of significant changes at Northland International University (NIU) the former Northland Baptist Bible College (NBBC). ... Today, we are going to consider another change in trajectory for NIU by President Matt Olson, who has moved beyond issues of music, discipline and legalism into compromise of doctrinal and institutional fidelity. On July 2, 2012, from his personal blog Dr. Olson wrote, ‘[On Sunday I visited] Grace Bible Church in Philadelphia, where Ian McConnell serves as the pastor for preaching and vision. It was great to connect with some Northland alumni at Grace as well. Danny Adams (and his wife Becky) serves as the pastor for children’s ministries. Jesse Trach is currently an elder in training and being evaluated for pastoral ministry and Nathan Branine is attending Grace while making much of Jesus in the Philadelphia school systems. Come the beginning of September Greg

Dietrich and his wife will be relocating to Philadelphia to attend Grace and work remotely for us at Northland.' ... At first read the paragraph seems harmless until you review the doctrinal statement of the Grace Bible Church. There you find that among its beliefs: 'We are evangelical, Reformed, and continuationist.' The latter is a contemporary term for those who believe and teach that the 1st century sign gifts of tongues, prophecy, miracles and healings have continued without interruption. The Grace Bible Church site lists itself as one of the family of Sovereign Grace Churches (SGC) founded by charismatic C. J. Mahaney, who, like John Piper, believes the 1st century sign gifts are in operation today. The Grace Bible Church links to SGM where you will read that, 'One of the primary connections among Sovereign Grace churches is our commitment to a common Statement of Faith, which we summarize as evangelical, Reformed, and charismatic.' ... We have three statements from the Northland Graduate School Academic Catalog that unequivocally oppose and reject the Charismatic Movement signs and wonders teaching. ... [Yet a] current Northland staff member (Greg Dietrich) will remain employed by Northland while in Philadelphia and a member of this church. Northland will pay salary to a man who will be actively participating in and under the authority of a church that is advancing the Charismatic Movement. ... Historically changes in music and association eventually lead to a change in doctrine or reveal a doctrinal change that has already taken place. This has happened at NIU. ... NIU's recent changes have shown us that its student body will be taught and influenced to tolerate, accept and/or embrace CCM's 'rock' styling, Calvinistic theology, the 'Lordship Salvation' interpretation of the gospel, and Charismatic sign gifts. These things have made inroads at NIU. Matt Olson has yoked the university to ministries, opened the university's classrooms and chapel to guest speakers who believe, preach and defend these views."

By 2012, Northland was rapping and jiving. The following is excerpted from “Northland Students Perform New ‘Jesus Loves Me,’” In Defense of the Gospel blog, Sept. 21, 2012:

“In his November 2010 *Open Letter* Northland International University (NIU) president Dr. Matt Olson declared that in the area of music philosophy, ‘*NIU is unchanged!*’ We have in past articles seen video evidence that NIU has changed drastically in the area of music performance. Matt Olson wrote that the goal of NIU will be to, ‘*make sure Northland’s practice of music ... is built principally on clear teachings from the Bible...*’ Today, I am presenting a new video recording that challenges the claim that NIU’s music philosophy is ‘*unchanged*’ and that *clear teachings from the Bible* are behind the practice of music at NIU. The video was recorded this semester at the home of current NIU Academic Chair for Communications, Mr. Brock Miller. Communication professors Lydia Stewart and Rachel Trach were also at this gathering. The occasion of the video was a fellowship for Communications department students. The participants in the video were described by students on their FaceBook pages as students who are proud to display their, ‘*rapping skills, beatboxing skills, attempting to harmonize ... Yeah, Communications majors have it all!*’ Had this been a one-time matter, there would be real disappointment. The video is, however, much like the behavior in NIU’s chapel with the song/dance routine to ‘*What is This Feeling*’ from the Broadway play *WICKED*. Do the sensual chants of RAP measure up to our mandate to *sing and make melody to the Lord*? You have just seen students, at the home and under the supervision of NIU faculty, disparaging the name of Jesus. Can anyone honestly say that the conduct of the students in this video is ‘*God-focused?*’” The rapping video can be seen at <http://indefenseofthegospel.blogspot.ca/2012/09/northland-students-perform-new-jesus.html>

Other Examples

Central Baptist Seminary of Minnesota and **Calvary Baptist Seminary of Pennsylvania** are also moving into the evangelical orb. They have bought into the New Evangelical “in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty” philosophy.

Calvary Baptist Seminary invited Southern Baptist leader Mark Dever to speak at their National Leadership Conference.

Kevin Bauder of Central Baptist uses his blog to praise “conservative evangelicals” such as Southern Baptist Seminary head Al Mohler, John Piper, D.A. Carson, and R. C. Sproul.

Bauder claims that the “conservative evangelicals” aren’t New Evangelicals and he conveniently defines New Evangelicalism in a way that proves his point (whereas his predecessors at Central, Richard Clearwaters and Ernest Pickering, displayed greater wisdom in their understanding of New Evangelism). While there are many aspects of New Evangelicalism, the defining principle from its inception was a “repudiation of separatism.” That was the way that Harold Ockenga put it. That is Billy and Franklin Graham’s foundational working principle. And by that definition, every Southern Baptist conservative is a New Evangelical. That is evident by the simple fact that they remain in the SBC, which is an unholy organization that encompasses theological Liberalism, Charismaticism, Masonism, Billy Graham ecumenical evangelism, modern textual criticism, amillennialism, the rock & roll emerging philosophy, female preachers, psychoheresy, Catholic mysticism, and other errors and evils. The Southern Baptist Convention is filled with men who have the same unscriptural philosophy as Ed Young Jr., with his non-judgmental, downplay doctrine philosophy and his close association with heretics such as Pentecostal Word-Faith preacher Brian Houston of Sydney, Australia. Brian’s wife is his “co-pastor”; he preaches a

prosperity gospel; he thinks vain muttering is “tongues speaking”; and his worship leader participates in Roman Catholic conferences. The “conservative” Southern Baptist Ed is fine with all that.

If you think I am wrong on this, send me a book or a preaching series by a “conservative evangelical” on biblical separation. Typically, the only thing they have to say about separation is ridicule for those who practice it. They refuse to be restrained by separation. They don’t have a heart for it. They want a big tent, but God’s Word doesn’t allow it.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

Other examples could be given. In fact, this rejection of “separatism” is sweeping through fundamental Baptist churches like a hurricane.

I am convinced that unless there is a dramatic change, most fundamental Baptist churches will be well down the New Evangelical-emerging path within 10-20 years.

In light of what we have witnessed in a mere two decades, we fundamental Baptist preachers need to ask ourselves some questions. What is to keep our churches from going the same direction as GARBC, BBFI, Southwide, Highland Park? What are we doing that these churches did not do? What are we *not* doing that these churches did do? If ever there was a time to learn from recent history, to refuse to follow “business as usual,” and to seriously batten down the hatches, it is now.

Pastor, is your church doing everything that is necessary to hold the line against the onslaught of the compromise that is leading to end-time apostasy?

Evangelical Bridge Builders

The path from Independent Baptist to the broader evangelicalism is clearly marked, and it typically leads through the Southern Baptist Convention. There we encounter treacherous waters where ancient heresies and end-time fables abound.

I don't know of any Independent Baptist preachers (yet) who believe in the non-judgmental *Shack* father-mother god or salvation apart from faith in Christ or Christian homosexuality or the downgrade of hell or the partial inspiration of Scripture or Robert Schuller's self-esteemism or who love the Roman Catholic Mass or promote contemplative mysticism or deny the substitutionary atonement of Christ or promote New Age practitioners.

But many evangelicals and Southern Baptists are guilty of these things.

When the walls of separation are torn down or become "soft," Independent Baptists can drift into these treacherous waters and become shipwrecked. In fact, they don't even have to drift out of the Independent Baptist movement today, because the treacherous waters are back flowing into the IB movement through the gaps in separation and bringing the spiritual dangers with them.

Some claim that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is "conservative" and theologically safe today and that the battle against liberalism has been won.

When Jerry Falwell led Thomas Road Baptist Church into the Southern Baptist Convention in 1996, he said, "... the national and Virginia Bible-believing conservatives ... have rescued the Southern Baptist Convention from theological liberalism" (Baptist Press, October 24, 1996).

When Highland Park Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee, went back into the Convention in 2008, a little over 50 years after leaving, Nat Phillips said that "he did not

believe the separation from the SBC would even have happened--were it today [because] the SBC has turned its direction back toward its conservative theological roots” (James Wigton, *Lee Roberson--Always about His Father's Business*, p. 233).

These are misguided, ill-informed statements. Shockingly so.

In reality, the SBC is more filled with heresy today than it was in the 1960s and 1970s when John R. Rice and others were warning about its liberalism and so many churches paid the price of leaving.

In September 1989 Jerry Huffman, editor of the *Calvary Contender*, rightly said, “The SBC IS AN UNEQUALLY-YOKED MIXED MULTITUDE.” That true statement was made after the “conservative renaissance.”

Consider the following testimony from a pastor who left the SBC in 1996:

“During my upbringing the compromise in the SBC began to creep in. It was subtle and almost imperceptible. The changes were hardly noticed. Yet, THE WAVES OF CONTINUED COMPROMISE CARRIED THE SBC INTO DEEP AND TREACHEROUS WATERS, FROM WHICH THEY NEVER RETURNED. It is sad to see many of the IB churches following the same course” (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

TREACHEROUS WATERS is a perfect description of evangelicalism in general and of the Southern Baptist Convention in particular. These waters are permeated with ancient and end-time heresies and fables (1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:13; 4:4; 2 Peter 2:1-2).

I almost entitled this report “The Treacherous waters of the Southern Baptist Convention,” but I decided against it, because the report is not for Southern Baptists or evangelicals at large. I don't think there is any hope for them. They mock

and malign and ignore the warners. They hide behind the impressive size of their denominations and movements and the brilliance of their scholars and refuse to heed godly reproof. They are like the rich man whose wealth is his strong city (Proverbs 18:11). Like the Laodicean Church, they are “rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing,” so what possible need would they have of correction? Thus, there is no hope. (That is also an accurate description of many Independent Baptist churches and Bible colleges who display the same attitude toward this type of warning.)

This report is for the Bible-believing fundamentalist churches that still have some spiritual/doctrinal backbone but are in danger of the treacherous waters through an ineffective separatism and other factors. It is for Bible-believing churches that still have the wisdom to listen to Bible-based, well-documented warnings.

My challenge to these churches is this: The only way to be protected is to keep your boat *entirely* out of the treacherous waters. A sound gospel, biblical education, serious discipleship, godly reproof, and separation are the divinely-ordained means of spiritual protection.

My warning to these churches is this: Every fundamentalist and Independent Baptist church that does not take Biblical separation *seriously* today and does not make the effort to practice *EFFECTIVE* separation will be well down the emerging evangelical path within 10-20 years. And if the church itself is not emerging by then, many of the current and future members will be.

Asa and Jehoshaphat

The SBC is a mixed multitude, and the best men in the Convention today, the “conservative evangelicals,” are like Asa and Jehoshaphat. They are good men as far as it goes, sound in their faith in the true God as known in Jesus Christ. They do not worship idols. But they are *not* known for tearing down idols and they don’t want to be known for tearing down

idols. And even when they do tear down *some* idols, they leave the high places intact so that idolatry/heresy continues to spread.

Some of the conservatives will lift a voice against a few errors, usually in a fairly vague manner, but large numbers of them are like Billy Graham and his brother-in-law Leighton Ford, who are universally acclaimed within the SBC and evangelicalism in general.

Graham warned about “false prophets” in generalities, but when asked by the *United Church Observer* of Canada whether he considered Paul Tillich a false prophet, Graham replied: “I have made it a practice not to pass judgment on other clergymen” (*United Church Observer*, July 1, 1966).



Leighton Ford in San Diego, 2009, said he would not criticize anyone

And when I interviewed Leighton Ford at the National Pastors Conference in San Diego in 2009 and asked him whether he is satisfied with where the evangelical movement has come, he replied that he would not criticize anyone! I had reminded him that there

were evangelicals at that very meeting who deny the substitutionary atonement and the infallible inspiration of Scripture, who write books depicting God as a woman, etc. Yet that was his rather flippant but very forceful reply to this important question.

If you look only at them (the “conservatives”), things seem fairly right, but if you look farther afield within their own associations and the larger movement they represent you see confusion and error abounding, while they stand in the midst of it all wearing the beguiling smile of spiritual pacifism and

maligning any prophet who seeks to correct them or their friends.

Like Jehoshaphat, they affiliate with the idolaters and the enemies of God instead of plainly reproofing and separating from them.

Contrast that “fundamentalist” Hezekiah, who “removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan” (2 Kings 18:4).

And contrast “fanatic” Josiah, who went through the entire land himself and oversaw the destruction of the idols. “And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men” (2 Kings 23:14).

But it’s probably been a hundred years since the the Southern Baptist Convention had a real rip-roaring idol-hater. The real prophets and the thorough-going idol haters have found a home in the Independent Baptist movement (and such men have been few and far between even there).

The “conservatives” we find today within the SBC in particular and evangelicalism at large are the Asas and the Jehoshaphats.

“And also Maachah his mother, even her he [ASA] removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron. BUT THE HIGH PLACES WERE NOT REMOVED: nevertheless Asa’s heart was perfect with the LORD all his days” (1 Kings 15:13-14).

“And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, SHOULDEST THOU HELP THE UNGODLY, AND LOVE THEM THAT HATE THE LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God” (2 Chronicles 19:2-3).

Jehoshaphat tore down *some* idols, but he associated with idolaters and for that he was judged by God and forcefully reproved by the prophet. He professed that he hated idols, but he yoked together with idolaters; he professed that he loved God but he also loved God's enemies. It was very confusing. He was "Mr. Facing Two Ways."

The Asa-Jehoshaphat-type of compromise is not a light matter. The compromise with idols, the refusal to deal with them aggressively, the refusal to tear them down and to destroy the high places where they are worshipped and where they proliferate, eventually led to the quenching of Israel's light and divine judgment on the nation.

The leaven of idolatry spread even during the reigns of the "conservative" kings because the idols and high places were not decidedly cut off.

We are supposed to learn from these things, for "all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

God's people need to wake up!!!!!!!!!!!!

Shortsighted men see only the present blessings and focus only on the good. They look at Asa- and Jehoshaphat-type preachers and see no big problem, surely nothing to get upset about. Shortsighted men regard reproving prophets to be more of a problem than compromising preachers, because they stir up trouble and cause "fragmentation."

But two times the book of Proverbs repeats the truth that "a prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3; 27:12). Two times means emphasis. Two times means "listen up!"

Shortsighted men don't understand that if sin and error are not dealt with plainly, if they aren't nipped in the bud, they eventually corrupt everything and ruin all of the good and the result is destruction.

Two times the New Testament repeats the truth that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” This is stated in relation to sin and again in relation to error (1 Corinthians 5:8; Galatians 5:9).

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” What a profound truth. If leaven is not removed, entirely removed, cut out, cut off, it continues to spread. Even if a little bit of it is left, it spreads and it eventually leavens the whole lump. Leaven is not stopped by preachers who focus on proclaiming positive truth and who avoid controversy and refuse to deal with sin and error and idols plainly. It is not stopped by dealing with only some idols. It matters not how much those preachers might love God and His Word in their own lives and how much “positive truth” they preach or how effectively they preach it or how zealously they deal with *some* of the idols. You can cut out 50%, 75%, even 95% of leaven, and it will still continue to spread. The devil merely has to bide his time.

Conservative Evangelicals Are Bridges to Every Sort of Heresy

Conservative evangelicals like Ed Stetzer and John Piper, are enablers of heresies by their refusal to deal with error plainly enough and to cut off association with it decidedly, and they therefore allow and even facilitate its spread.

For example, **ED STETZER**, head of the SBC’s LifeWay research department, holds to the “in non-essentials liberty” philosophy, despises separatism, and associates with pretty much anybody and everybody. He is a bridge to the “broader church” that is filled to the brim today with ancient and end-time heresies (such as baptismal regeneration, popery, Mariolatry, sacramentalism, anti-Trinitarianism, universalism, Catholic mysticism, kingdom now reconstructionism, Charismaticism, theistic evolution, fallible inspiration of Scripture, panentheism, the non-judgmental “Shack” god, and Christian homosexuality).

As far as I know, Stetzer doesn't hold to these heresies, but he is a bridge to the broader "evangelical church" where an individual can easily be influenced by any and all of these. He is a bridge to the treacherous waters.



Mark Driscoll (l), Ed Stetzer (r)

Most of these heresies are represented by the authors featured in any LifeWay Bookstore and certainly by those with whom those authors are directly associated.

Consider some of Stetzer's associations. He is closely affiliated with Mark Driscoll, who is "culturally liberal" (e.g., ushering in the New Year through champaign dance parties), hates the doctrine of the Rapture, and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among other things.

Stetzer is affiliated with fellow Southern Baptist Rick Warren, who in turn is closely affiliated with New Agers and



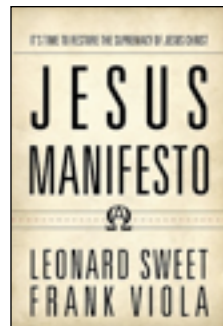
Rick Warren and Ed Stetzer

universalists (e.g., Tony Blair, Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, Leonard Sweet) and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among many other things. Stetzer is non-critically affiliated with the Billy Graham Evangelistic

Association, which in turn is affiliated with the papacy and has turned thousands of "converts" over to the Catholic Church. Stetzer is affiliated with the most liberal of emergents, who deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture,

the substitutionary atonement, a literal hell, and many other fundamentals of the faith. Though Stetzer criticizes their heresies, he does so in gentle, intellectual, dialoguing terms and refuses to disassociate from them. He won't stand up on his hind legs and reprove them in no uncertain terms for the rank heretics they are! For example, Stetzer participates in Shapevine, an emerging church blog that features liberal emergents such as Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, Sally Morgenthaler, Alan Hirsch, and Leonard Sweet. Shapevine is called "a global community of collaborators." "Conservative Southern Baptists" like Stetzer are right in the middle of this unscriptural collaboration in disobedience to Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Timothy 3:5, and other Scriptures. (See our book *What Is the Emerging Church?* for documentation of the dangerous heresies of the aforementioned emergent leaders.)

Stetzer endorsed the 2010 book *Jesus Manifesto* authored by Frank Viola and Leonard Sweet. *Jesus Manifesto* introduces its readers to a virtual who's who of ancient and end-time heretics: Karl Barth, Thomas Aquinas, Origen, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John Henry Newman, Søren Kierkegaard, G.K. Chesterton, Thomas à Kempis, E. Stanley Jones (who is called "the great Methodist missionary"), Roger Schutz (founder of Taizé), the "Cappadocian Fathers," Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Reinhold Niebuhr, to mention a few. All of these are quoted favorably without a hint of warning about their rank heresies.



It is not an accident that Viola and Sweet repeatedly and favorably quote Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Reinhold Niebuhr, since they hold to a heretical Neo-Orthodox view of Scripture. Consider the following excerpts, which could be multiplied:

“Chapters 1 and 2 [of Genesis] were never intended to be the battleground for the Creation-versus-evolution debate” (*Jesus Manifesto*, p. 9).

“The Christian religion teaches that the Bible answers virtually every question that’s brought to the sacred text. The problem with this line of thought is that the true God cannot fit into anyone’s box” (p. 130).

“Truth is not a book ... or a creed ... Truth is a person. And Jesus is His name. Christianity, therefore, is not fundamentally about following a book” (p. 137).

“[The Bible] speaks anew to every age. It should be read in the light of new information and fresh discoveries. It must also be understood in community, not as an individual. ... Each age draws new insights from the Scriptures based on what that age brings to it. This means that revelation is always veiled in mystery. We bring to it our culture, our history, our gaze, and our glasses. The fundamentalist idea that the text has only one meaning is of relatively recent invention” (pp. 139, 140).

We have been told that the Southern Baptist Convention rejected Neo-Orthodoxy and rooted it from its seminaries, but here we have one of its prominent leaders endorsing a current book that is filled with Neo-Orthodox heresy. Frank Viola is the father of the so-called organic church movement which renounces the office of pastor-elder. Leonard Sweet promotes a New Agey universalist-tinged spirituality that he calls New Light and “quantum spirituality” and “the Christ consciousness.” He describes it in terms of “the union of the human with the divine” which is the “center feature of all the world’s religions” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 235). He defines the New Light as “a structure of human becoming, a channeling of Christ energies through mindbody experience” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 70). He says that “New Light pastors” hold the doctrine of “embodiment of God in the very substance of creation” (p. 124). In *Carpe Mañana*, Sweet says that the earth is as much a part of the body of

Christ as humans and that humanity and the earth constitutes “a cosmic body of Christ” (p. 124). Sweet says that some of the “New Light leaders” that have influenced his thinking are Matthew Fox, M. Scott Peck, Willis Harman, and Ken Wilber. These are prominent New Agers who believe in the divinity of man, as we have documented in the book *The New Age Tower of Babel*. Both Viola and Sweet have endorsed *The Shack* with its non-judgmental father-mother god. Both Viola and Sweet promote Roman Catholic contemplative mysticism and dangerous mystics such as the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton.

To recommend a book like *Jesus Manifesto* and writers such as Frank Viola and Leonard Sweet, it is obvious that Ed Stetzer is not “conservative.” He is the blind leading the blind, and the ditch into which he has fallen is filled with end-time apostasy.

Consider **JOHN PIPER**. He is another bridge to the heresies in the “broader evangelical church.” In April 2011, Piper conducted a Desiring God conference at Rick Warren’s



John Piper and Rick Warren

Saddleback Church, and in June he preached at the annual Southern Baptist pastors' conference, again joining hands with Rick Warren.

When you get into Rick Warren's sphere, you are within reach of all sorts of heresies and fables. These are treacherous waters, indeed. Warren preaches the heretical "judge not" philosophy; turns the church into a rock & roll entertainment center complete with pelvic thrusts; says God won't ask about your doctrinal views; continually and approvingly quotes from heretics in his writings and preaching (such as Roman Catholic universalists Mother Teresa, Henri Nouwen, and Thomas Merton); promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism; likens Christian fundamentalists to Islamic terrorists; calls for unity between Baptists, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Anglicans, etc.; promotes the exceedingly liberal Baptist World Alliance; yokes together with New Age practitioners; says that believers should work with unbelievers and pagan religionists to build the kingdom of God; and presents Roman Catholic one-worlorder Tony Blair with a peace prize (March 2011). For documentation see <http://www.wayoflife.org/database/warrenheader.html>

In spite of the danger represented by John Piper's association with these treacherous waters, his popularity is growing among Independent Baptists. In a 2005 survey of roughly 1,100 "young fundamentalists," almost 50% agreed with the statement, "John Piper's ministry has been a help to me." Kevin Bauder of Central Baptist Seminary has recently used his blog to praise Piper. Northland University has also been "resonating" with Piper and other "conservative evangelicals."

The Danger of Soft Separatism

Soft separatism is the path from fundamental Baptist churches to the conservative Southern Baptists and evangelicals who in turn are bridges to the broader evangelicalism that is filled with end-time apostasy.

Conservative Southern Baptists and conservative evangelicals don't believe in separation. In fact, they often renounce it. Thus, as we have seen in the examples of Ed Stetzer and John Piper, they and their popular ministries are bridges to the heresies and fables that populate the Convention today.

Typically, Independent Baptists profess to believe in separation, but all too often it is a soft, ineffectual type. It is ineffectual to protect God's people.

Following are some of the characteristics of soft separatism.

Avoiding “negativism and criticism”

Soft separatism is characterized by focusing on positive truth and avoiding “negativism and criticism.” Soft separatists don't reprove error plainly or name the names of compromisers. They don't expose the conservative evangelical bridge builders. Soft separatists avoid dealing with “personalities.”

Not reproofing and separating from compromising leaders

Soft separatists don't distance themselves properly from those who are headed in a wrong direction in order to cut off the leaven of compromise from their personal lives and families and churches. Soft separatists don't effectively reprove and disassociate from IBaptist preachers who are affiliating with the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large. And even when they do disassociate

to some extent, they do it “quietly” and no one knows what is happening and the leaven of compromise is not therefore stopped.

Focusing on unity and avoiding fragmentation

Soft separatists are more concerned about the danger of “fragmentation” and more desirous of “unity,” at least among independent Baptists, and getting along with the brethren than about standing for the truth. Toward this end, soft separatists divide truth into “essentials” and “non-essentials,” whereas Paul praised the churches for keeping all of the apostolic tradition, even such seeming less important things such as the teaching on hair and how to keep the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:2).

Lacking proper education

Soft separatists don’t properly educate the Lord’s people so that they won’t be led astray by the evangelical bridge builders. In a soft separatist church the people are too ignorant about important issues such as contemporary music, New Evangelicalism, the Southern Baptist Convention, Reformed theology, reconstructionism, Darwinian and theistic evolution, contemplative mysticism, and the emerging church.

I recall a veteran Independent Baptist missionary who once looked around for a few minutes in my 6,000-volume library. He had no questions and showed zero interest and the only comment he made was negative, because he looked upon serious research as more of a hindrance and a sidetrack than a blessing.

That is the mindset that has already destroyed a great many IBaptist churches both here and around the world and it is going to destroy a great many more in coming years. And this is a missionary who has started churches and raised a godly family, but even godly people can be destroyed for lack of

knowledge when they are guided more by human tradition than the Bible and when they are more man followers than Christ followers.

With this type of mindset, the preacher doesn't carefully ground his people in such a way that they can deal effectively and intelligently with the issues of the day. He teaches them how to be faithful church members and to do evangelism and encourages them to love their wives and discipline their kids and separate from the world, and these are all good things; but this isn't enough to protect the churches from the onslaught of end-time apostasy and the subtle compromise of the hour. Most Southwide Baptist churches and GARBC congregations and BBFI churches taught these things, but they still fell to New Evangelicalism and the contemporary philosophy.

A decade or so ago my pastor rented a table at the Southwide Baptist Fellowship for two or three years running. He offered solid Bible study books such as the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity* and *Things Hard to Be Understood* and seriously-researched books on issues such as music and New Evangelicalism. Though the books were discounted, there was almost no interest by the hundreds of preachers in attendance. I see a direct connection between this and the spiritual downfall of and collapse of separatism in a great many of those same churches, including the host church, Highland Park Baptist Church, which is a rock & roll Southern Baptist congregation today.

A couple of decades ago, those same churches renounced New Evangelicalism, but even the pastors had only a vague idea of New Evangelicalism's history and principles and were uneducated about contemporary music, etc., *and weren't interested in studying such issues*. And their people were more ignorant by far.

In light of the fact that every Independent Baptist church is inundated with New Evangelical philosophy from every direction (Christian bookstores, Christian radio, Internet,

friends, neighbors, relatives), it is no surprise that churches that were not properly educated and spiritually fortified against error are in the New Evangelical camp today or are moving rapidly in that direction.

There are exceptions, praise the Lord, but the fundamental Baptist church that has an interest in anything more substantive than a few little pamphlets is the exception and not the rule, and most church members don't take the time even to read pamphlets.

The people aren't encouraged to read substantive magazines such as *O Timothy* and *The Fundamentalist Journal* that would enable them to keep abreast of the compromise and apostasy.

The members of soft separatist churches walk into a typical Christian bookstore and are unequipped to distinguish between sound and unsound authors, and are thus in great danger of being influenced in a wrong direction. They are unequipped to discern the compromise represented by the nationally-syndicated personalities on Christian radio. They are unequipped to deal effectively with the error that permeates the Internet. They are unequipped to confront the error of contemporary Christian music and to deal with the contemporary worship phenomenon. They don't know Darlene Zschech from Annie Oakley.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." (Hosea 4:6).

I thank the Lord for the fundamental Baptist churches that are engaged in training their people properly and educating them in the issues they must face. Consider four examples among many I could give:

Cozaddale Baptist Temple, Goshen, Ohio, where Travis Burke is Pastor and Rick Sallee is Associate Pastor, has regular one-week training programs during which they bring in a knowledgeable speaker and focus on a Bible doctrine or issue. I spoke at one of these in 2011 on the theme of the

dangers of contemporary Christianity. I preached for four days on the topics of the Bible's Proof, the Emerging Church, Contemporary Christian Music, and Bible Prophecy. The response was enthusiastic and very encouraging only because the pastor has made the effort to hold the standard of biblical separation high and to educate the people so that they are not offended at the truth.

Grace Baptist Church, Oxford, Pennsylvania, is pastored by Steve Rogers. In 2011 I preached there for five days on the theme of compromise and biblical separation. I preached on Contemporary Christian Music, Bible Prophecy, the Emerging Church, the Charismatic Movement, and New Evangelicalism. Again, the response was enthusiastic and encouraging. Most of the members were there for every service, which is always a sign of a spiritually healthy church. The book table, which was packed with titles providing the education that church members need today, was well used.

Hope Baptist Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas, is a new work pastored by Terry Coomer. I appreciate Pastor Coomer's humble but unbending stand for the truth in this wicked day. He is busy not only in soul winning (they have knocked on 23,000 doors in one and a half years) but also in serious Bible training and discipleship. He spends much time personally discipling the flock and has started a one-night Bible Institute. The church, though young, already operates a book store ministry to provide educational materials (including Way of Life books) to the people

Lighthouse Baptist Church, Rolesville, North Carolina, is a five-year-old church pastored by Bryan Greene. He has a Bible Institute to disciple his people and to train Christian workers, and he regularly has visiting preachers in for five days of intensive focus on a doctrine or theme. In 2011 I taught a series of messages on "Why We Hold to the King James Bible." Brother Greene is a humble man of God who is upholding biblical standards of holy living and is striving to provide serious Bible education for the people. The

congregation has already sent out missionary families to plant churches in other parts of America and beyond.

I could describe many other churches like this, and I thank the Lord that such churches exist. They are laying a proper biblical and spiritual foundation against the onslaught of end-times apostasy. These are my kind of Independent Baptists.

The church is the pillar and ground of the truth and it is essential for the cause of truth that we establish biblically-sound, spiritually-healthy, properly-discipled, discipline-practicing, well-educated churches for the glory of Christ and the blessing of the people.

In this day of “soft fundamentalism” it is refreshing to be associated with men who are willing to fly the flag of godly biblical separation high, men who don’t buy into the “in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty” heresy, and who do not hesitate to educate their people properly in the face of growing compromise and apostasy.

Carelessness about music

Soft separatism is characterized today by an increasingly careless attitude toward the issue of music. This is in spite of the fact that music is one of the most powerful influences in modern society and contemporary music lies at the very heart of the drift from “fundamentalism” to New Evangelicalism.

The attitude that is proliferating among fundamental Baptists is that it is a personal, local church matter rather than a biblical matter. This attitude was expressed to me recently by a pastor who said that “as far as music is concerned, I see it as a local church issue, not a ‘way of life’ issue.” He was saying that he doesn’t accept my warnings about the danger of contemporary Christian music, that each pastor is at liberty to decide what type of music to use, that it is none of my business.

It is ever more common among fundamental Baptist churches to malign those preachers who are still warning about the dangers of CCM and who are trying to help the churches draw godly lines between sacred and contemporary music. Each time I have warned about the drift toward CCM in a fundamental Baptist college I have been deluged with angry communications from students and graduates who defend the compromise.

This attitude was not widespread until recently. Not that long ago, CCM was almost universally condemned among fundamental Baptists. That is no longer the case. Even many of those who still profess to be opposed to “Christian rock” hold an inconsistent, hypocritical position in that they do not make an issue of “soft rock” and the adaptation of and toning down of Contemporary Christian Worship music (CCW).

This carelessness about music is unscriptural and extremely dangerous. Few forces in church and society today are more powerful than music. Preachers who are taking the position that music is not a major issue and that it is largely a matter of personal taste are playing with fire, and not only will they and their own families be burned, but also their church members.

AND THIS WILL BE EVEN MORE EVIDENT IN THE NEXT GENERATION.

Contemporary worship music is sensual and feeds the flesh and is a powerful bridge both to secular rock as well as the “broader church” with all of its heresies and compromises. We have documented this extensively in many reports such as “Musical Associations and CCM Adaptation,” “Analyzing Adapted CCM Songs,” and in the video series “Music for Good or Evil.”

Many Independent Baptist churches are “adapting” contemporary worship music by toning down the rhythm (trying to take the rock out of Christian rock), but this is very dangerous.

The CCM movers and shakers know that their music is transformative. In an interview with *Christianity Today*, Don Moen of Integrity Music said:

“I’ve discovered that worship [music] is transdenominational, transcultural. IT BRIDGES ANY DENOMINATION. Twenty years ago there were many huge divisions between denominations. Today I think the walls are coming down. In any concert that I do, I will have 30-50 different churches represented.”

In fact, they are actively targeting “old-fashioned” churches to move them into the “broader church.”

There are TRANSITION SONGS and BRIDGE SONGS designed to move traditional churches along the contemporary path toward Christian rock. From the perspective of the CCM artists involved in this, they aren’t doing anything sinister. They are simply trying to “feed” the “broader church.” But from a fundamentalist Bible-believing position, the effect is to draw “old-fashioned” Bible churches into the contemporary orb, and that is most sinister.

Bridge songs include “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” by Stuart Townend and “In Christ Alone” by Townend and Keith Getty.

These songs are doctrinally sound and hymn-like (soft rock ballad style as opposed to out-and-out rock & roll), so they are considered “safe” by traditional churches.

But by using this music a church is brought into association with the contemporary world that Townend represents and that carries Independent Baptist church members into treacherous waters.

(See “Analyzing ‘Adapted’ CCM Songs” for video clips of how one Independent Baptist church is pursuing this technique -- <http://www.wayoflife.org/adaptingccm/index.html>)

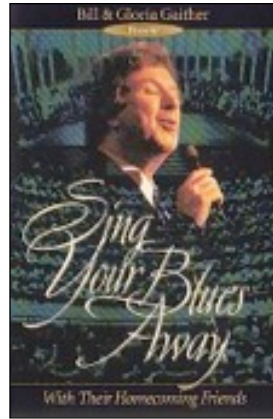
Townend is an out-and-out Christian rocker. He is charismatic in theology and radically ecumenical in

philosophy, supporting the Alpha program which bridges charismatic, Protestant, and Roman Catholic churches. He is a member of Church of Christ the King in Brighton, U.K. and supports the “extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit,” which refers to the demonic/fleshly charismatic mysticism such as nonsensical ecstatic tongues, spirit slaying, holy laughter, and shaking.



Townend is holding hands with the “broader church” in all of its facets and heresies and end-time apostasies, and Townend’s objective in writing “hymn-like” contemporary songs is ecumenism. He is doubtless sincere in this, but he is sincerely and decidedly and dangerously *wrong*. Townend is a rock & roller, pure and simple. In his blog he says that he doesn’t go home and put on a hymns album, because this is not “where I’m at musically at all.” He wants to use the soft CCM to bring “traditional churches” into association with the “broader church.”

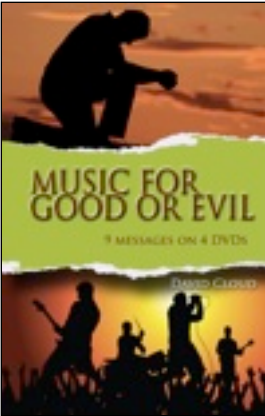
When “traditional” churches borrow Townend’s “soft” CCM “hymns,” the contemporary churches are in no danger of being “traditionalized,” but the traditional churches are most definitely in danger of being contemporized and led into the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism.



Contemporary Southern Gospel is probably as dangerous as Contemporary Worship Music, and its popularity is growing by leaps and bounds among fundamental Baptists. My warnings about Bill Gaither and his crowd have, for the

most part, either fallen on deaf ears or stirred up anger and bitter rejection of my ministry.

(See “Bill Gaither’s Disobedience” and “Southern Gospel Music” at the Way of Life web site. There is also a segment on Southern Gospel in the video series “Music for Good or Evil,” which is available on DVD or eVideo downloads from the Way of Life web site -- www.wayoflife.org.)



Contemporary Southern Gospel tends to bring the same type of broadminded tolerance and ecumenical thinking and rejection of “strict separatism” as Contemporary Worship Music brings to a church.

A church will not long maintain a truly biblical separatist stance if it embraces either contemporary Southern Gospel or Contemporary Worship Music.

Within a decade or two such churches will have adopted a different stance, a New Evangelical-contemporary-emerging one.

We have seen that soft separatism is characterized by avoiding “negativism and criticism,” not reproofing and separating from compromising leaders, focusing on unity and avoiding fragmentation, lacking proper education, and careless about music.

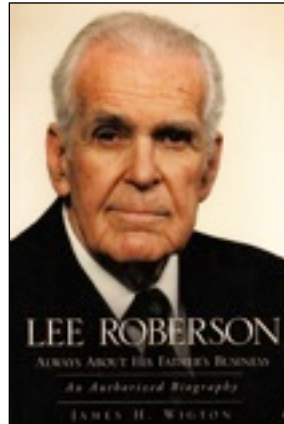
In these ways “soft separatist” IBaptist preachers allow bridges to be built between their churches and the evangelical/Southern Baptist world. The compromise that is encountered there flows back into the churches and weakens them, eventually destroying their separatist character, since it never fails that “evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33).

The downward path usually looks like this: First, the church practices separation and is staunchly fundamentalist in this sense. Next it continues to profess to believe in separation while neglecting it and not campaigning for it, straddling the fence. Finally the church becomes an outspoken enemy of separation and is firmly in the camp of evangelicalism.

The Model for Soft Separatism

Lee Roberson, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church for 40 years and founder of Tennessee Temple University, was a model for “soft separatism” in the IBaptist movement, and his influence has been massive. Everything was kept on a positive, upbeat note. Dr. Roberson’s biographer observes:

"Roberson developed a focus that controlled his ministry. 'I kept my mind and ministry settled -- winning people to Christ, getting people to grow in grace,' he said. 'Stay out of controversy in the pulpit--stay out of it and stay on the main line. I think that helped me a lot. I tried to avoid personalities and stay on the main line: preaching the gospel, emphasis on winning people to Christ, emphasis on developing the spiritual life, dying to self, the fullness of the Spirit, the second coming--kept on the positive side, kept negatives away from the people.' ... Negativism and criticism simply were not a part of Lee Roberson's life" (Wigton, pp. 78, 243).



Typically, warnings were given only in generalities. Leading compromisers such as Jerry Falwell or James Dobson or Bill Bright or Charles Swindoll or even Billy Graham were not identified by name from the pulpit and their error was

not detailed and highlighted so that the people could get a proper grasp of the danger they represented.

“Later when Billy Graham’s ecumenical cooperation became a controversial issue among fundamentalists, Lee Roberson quietly backed out of such cooperation. ‘Dr. Roberson NEVER SAID A CRITICAL WORD ABOUT IT,’ said Faulkner. ‘If he had anything to say, it was always positive. That was his position on all issues. He just never had a critical word about anything. ... He won’t talk about the brethren. You never heard him in the pulpit here call anyone names.’ ... Ed Johnson, always loyal to Dr. Roberson said, ‘He avoided controversy. We were not exposed to the rise of the neo-evangelicalism in my days at Temple. Doc stayed away from that controversy.’ ...

“When it became common for some independent Baptists to criticize independent Baptist leaders such as Jerry Falwell or evangelist Tim Lee for preaching for Southern Baptists or other non-independent Baptist ministries, Roberson never wavered in his support of such men. He felt that men like Falwell and Lee had a heart for the Lord and for souls, and that was all that mattered to him” (Wigton, pp. 240, 241).

It has been said that no position can be maintained without a campaign, and I am convinced that lack of campaigning is one of the chief reasons why Highland Park is a rock & roll Southern Baptist institution today.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the church claimed to be fundamentalist and professed *not* to be New Evangelical, but there was no campaigning *for* separatism and *against* New Evangelicalism.

They were Independent Baptist and not Southern Baptist, but there was no real campaigning *against* the Southern Baptist Convention and little or no clear exposure of the compromise there, and the bridges to the Convention were not broken down.

As a student at Temple in the 1970s, I learned many good things and I thank the Lord for it, but the problem resided

more in what I *didn't* learn. This is the heart of New Evangelical error. It is not the heresy that is taught that is the problem; it is the truth that is neglected. It is not a complete lack of Biblical stance; it is the softness of that stance.

It was not uncommon for pot shots to be taken against real separatists and those men who did issue plain warnings.

Positivism is death in the pot of any church or school that wants to maintain a biblical position, because the Bible is most assuredly filled with a lot of very “negative” stuff, and plain warning against sin, error, and compromise is a major characteristic of the New Testament writings.

Paul often named names, and he said, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Philippians 3:17). In the Pastoral Epistles he named the names of false teachers and compromisers many times (e.g., Hymenaeus and Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes, Hymenaeus and Philetus, Alexander the Coppersmith, Demas). These epistles were used among the churches to train preachers in that day. Paul’s “criticism” of these men was a matter of public record, which is how it must be. How is it reasonable to allow false teachers and compromisers to influence people without PUBLICLY reproofing them? Private reproof doesn’t help those being influenced by them.

Because of Dr. Roberson’s soft separation, bridges were maintained with the Southern Baptist Convention and the broader evangelical world.

“Roberson never fought against Southern Baptists, nor did he openly criticize them” (Wigton, *Lee Roberson*, pp. 227, 228, 232, 242).

The soft stance on separatism and the wrong associations and lack of clear education about and warning against error were the reason why the church’s deacons were not prepared to choose a pastor to replace Dr. Roberson. They were not properly educated about New Evangelicalism and many other

important issues pertaining to the isms and schisms of our day, and the association with New Evangelicals and Southern Baptists was already established. So it is no surprise that the deacons chose a soft fundamentalist followed by an out-and-out New Evangelical to replace Dr. Roberson.

The Old Prophets Were Not Soft Separatists

Focusing on preaching “positive truth,” avoiding plain identification of and reproof of compromise and error, being careless in associations with compromisers, praising “conservative evangelicals,” adapting contemporary worship music -- all of this and more is “soft separatism,” and the prophets show us the heart of God toward it.

The prophets were taught by God to have the future in view; they saw the end of the matter. They were not pragmatists who only cared about what seemed to work to “build something for God.” They were more concerned about toppling idols than avoiding fragmentation. They weren’t positivists who saw only the good. They knew that not all “criticism” is wrong. They didn’t preach against a mere select list of “essential” idols while leaving the rest alone as “non-essentials.” They didn’t put some idolaters out of bounds of reproof.

The old prophets teach us that God requires spiritual leaders to remove all the idols, to reprove all the evil, and if they don’t they are greatly compromising the New Testament faith and God is highly displeased.

Every preacher will give account for the same solemn charge that was delivered by the apostle Paul to Timothy:

“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou MIGHTEST CHARGE SOME THAT THEY TEACH NO OTHER DOCTRINE. ... I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou KEEP THIS COMMANDMENT WITHOUT SPOT, unrebukeable, until

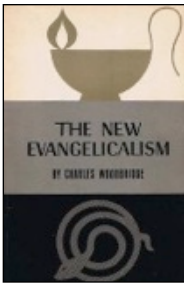
the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 1:3; 6:13-14).

The Word of God warns that those who associate with heresy can lose their rewards and become partakers of the evil deeds of those who are committed to false teaching (2 John 7-11).

Heresies and High Places in Evangelicalism

The Southern Baptist Convention in specific, and evangelicalism at large, today is not a safe place spiritually. Evangelicalism is filled to the brim with ancient and end-time heresies and idols and fables that can be found in the “high places” that have not been torn down.

Indeed, the Convention represents “treacherous waters.”



For 50 years men of God have warned that the principle of New Evangelicalism, which is to renounce “separatism” or to be soft on “separatism,” would result in spiritual destruction, because the Bible forcefully states, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33), and, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9).

In 1969, Dr. Charles Woodbridge, issued the following warning:

“The New Evangelicalism advocates TOLERATION of error. It is following the downward path of ACCOMMODATION to error, COOPERATION with error, CONTAMINATION by error, and ultimate CAPITULATION to error!” (Charles Woodbridge, *The New Evangelicalism*, 1969).

Dr. Woodbridge was a very knowledgeable man. He wrote the previous words as a fundamentalist, but he had spent many years as an evangelical insider. He was a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in its early days, a founding member of the National Association of Evangelicals, and a personal friend of men such as Harold Ockenga and Carl Henry, but he rejected the New Evangelicalism as unscriptural and spent the rest of his life warning of its dangers.

In that day Woodbridge and others who issued similar warnings were mocked and ignored. They were sidelined as irrelevant and cranky, even dangerous.

But today the truth of Dr. Woodbridge's passionate warning is clear for all to see. Evangelicalism has capitulated to the error from which it has refused to separate.

In 1985, Harold Lindsell, another evangelical insider, issued the following warning: "Evangelicalism today is in a sad state of disarray. ... Evangelicalism's children are in the process of forsaking the faith of their fathers" (*Christian News*, Dec. 2, 1985).

As we will see, not only have many evangelicals lost the faith of their fathers, they have also lost the God of their fathers.

Following are 21 examples of wretched heresies and fables that have found a home in this broad movement. Most of these heresies and fables are represented by authors distributed by LifeWay bookstores, which are owned by the Southern Baptist Convention.

- The Smorgasbord of Modern Bible Versions
- Process Salvation
- Ecumenism and Affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church
- Masonic Paganism
- Cultural Liberalism
- Rock & Roll Heathenism
- Salvation Apart from Faith in Christ
- Christian Homosexuality
- Downgrade of Hell
- Downgrade of Biblical Inspiration
- Theistic Evolution
- Catholic Contemplative Mysticism
- Charismatic Heresy and Weirdness
- Positive Thinking
- Schuller's Self-Esteemism
- Dobson's Self-Esteemism

- Unconditional Love
- Unconditional Forgiveness
- Denying the Substitutionary Blood Atonement
- New Age
- False Gods and Goddesses

Churches that do not take a strict and clear separatist stance put their members in danger of being captured by any of these false ways. If an individual starts dabbling with “the broader church,” there is no telling where he will end up. We will give some frightful examples of this at the end of the report.

Those who affiliate with “conservative Southern Baptists,” letting down the guard of biblical separation and buying into the softer, more tolerant stance, are only an arm’s length from any of these dangers.

THE SMORGASBORD OF MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS

The place we will begin our investigation into heresies and high places in the Southern Baptist Convention is the Bible section of any LifeWay bookstore.

There is a complete capitulation to the heresy of modern textual criticism and its Alexandrian Greek text and a capitulation to the idea that a multiplicity of versions is a blessing.

The smorgasbord principle in Bible versions is a very slippery slope. When the modern version path is first entered from a conservative KJV stance, it is typical for the individual to stay with the more conservative, literal modern translations. But these are very treacherous waters, and they frequently lead to the capitulation of all sense of spiritual discernment and to the acceptance of the strangest, most radical “versions” such as The New Living Bible and The Message. We will give many examples of this.

Before we go farther, though, we want to say that when we warn against the modern versions and promote the King James Bible, we are not fighting for some Ruckmanite principle such as that the King James was given by inspiration or that the King James is advanced revelation over the Greek and Hebrew or that to modernize or change the spelling of a word in the King James is to corrupt God's Word. We are not saying that it is unimportant to learn the biblical languages or that we should throw away all of the lexicons. Some King James defenders do take such a stand, but that is not our position, and we are convinced that Peter Ruckman and Gail Riplinger and their followers have done nearly as much damage to the cause of the King James Bible as the modern versions have done.

The first great error of the modern versions is that they are based on a Greek text that was created in the 19th century through the humanistic "science" of modern textual criticism. This "science" treated the Bible as just another book and denied the divine inspiration of Scripture and God's promise to preserve the Scripture. A large percentage of the principle names in the field of modern textual criticism are Christ-denying Unitarians and theological Modernists. (e.g., Simon, Bengel, Wettstein, Griesbach, Lachmann, Westcott, Hort, Schaff, Thayer, Briggs, Driver, Brown, Nestle, Liddle, Scott, von Soden, Kittel, Conybeare, Kenyon, Burkitt, Robinson, Lake, Souter, Clark, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Dodd, Bratcher, Colwell, Kilpatrick, Nida, Ehrman, Childs, Aland, Martini, Metzger, and Karavidopoulos).

We have documented this extensively in our book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

The modern Greek text removes or questions dozens of entire verses: Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Luke 17:36; 23:17; John 5:4; 7:53 - 8:11; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:7.

The word difference between the Received Greek New Testament underlying the KJV and that underlying the modern versions is very large. More than 2,800 words are removed in the modern Greek text. That is the equivalent of the entire epistles of 1 and 2 Peter. (This exposes the myth that only 1/2 page of text is in question.)

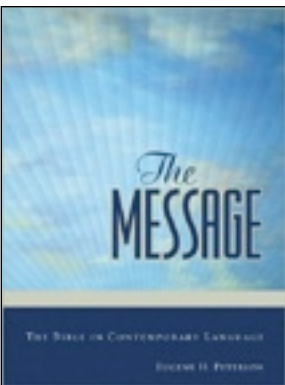
Textual criticism creates a Greek text that weakens many doctrines, such as the doctrine of Christ's deity. Consider, for example, 1 Timothy 3:16, where the word "God" is removed in all of the modern versions. We give many other examples of this in the book *Why We Hold to the King James Bible*.

John Burgon and many other Bible-believing scholars exposed modern textual criticism at its inception and warned that the textual critics were preferring Bible manuscripts that can be traced to Egypt at a time when heretics were tampering with the Scriptures and introducing heresies.

We have documented this in *For Love of the Bible: The History of the Defense of the King James Bible and Its Received Greek Text*.

Another great error associated with the modern versions is the principle of dynamic equivalency which has given translators great and frightful liberty in changing God's words.

At this point, the waters get even more treacherous.



Consider *The Message*, which is extremely popular throughout evangelicalism and beyond. The following examples are typical:

Matthew 5:3

KJV - "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

THE MESSAGE - "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule."

Matthew 5:8

KJV - “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

THE MESSAGE - “You’re blessed when you get your inside world, your mind and heart, put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.”

Matthew 5:14

KJV - “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”

THE MESSAGE - “Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.”

You might say, “Who in the world would use and recommend such a corruption?”

The answer is a Who’s Who list of evangelicals and Southern Baptists. *The Message* has been recommended by **Billy Graham, Warren Wiersbe, Jack Hayford, J.I. Packer, Michael Card, Leighton Ford, Bill Hybels, Lamar Cooper of Criswell College, Paul House of Southern Baptist Seminary, Bill and Gloria Gaither, Chuck Swindoll, Gary Smalley, Gordon Fee, Gordon MacDonald, Jerry Jenkins, John Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Max Lucado, Michael W. Smith, the Newsboys, Phil Driscoll, Rebecca St. James, Stuart and Jill Briscoe, Tony Campolo, and Vernon Grounds**, to name a few. **Rick Warren** quotes it frequently, five times in the first chapter of *The Purpose-Driven Life*. **Joni Earckson Tada** says, “WOW! What a treasure *The Message* is.” (This information was gathered from the NAVPress web site.).

A major problem with the modern version movement is a very practical one: it has weakened the authority of God’s Word through the smorgasbord principle. This has happened through an ever-expanding, almost bewildering, multiplicity of versions, and the people are encouraged simply to pick their favorites with no solid standard of

biblical authority as an anchor. Consider the following testimony by a former Southern Baptist pastor:

“The problem with the SBC is that they have no absolute biblical authority. Although, while I was still SBC, we claimed to have settled the matter of the inerrancy of Scripture in 1986, we did not settle what Scripture is. The plethora of translations has continued unabated in the two decades since they ‘settled the matter of inerrancy.’ The abundance of translations provoked me to study the translation issue. I spent two years studying the issue, in an effort to disprove the idea that the King James was any better than the rest. Of course, when I approached the issue with an open mind and heart, the Holy Spirit taught me the truth. That was the ‘straw that broke the camel’s back’ for me. I left the convention in October 1996. With each translation saying something different, the casualty has been biblical discernment. The typical SBC church has no less than four different translations in any given service. So, it is impossible for the people to hear ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ EVERY ISSUE BECOMES DEBATABLE. EVERY CONVICTION BECOMES QUESTIONABLE. Then, spiritual discernment becomes typical of the time of the Judges (i.e., every man doing that which is right in his own eyes). Therefore, it makes sense that they are so willing and ready to accept the abominable heresies of *The Shack*.” (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

Consider Rick Warren, the most prominent and influential Southern Baptist today. He uses a multiplicity of versions in every sermon and in every book he writes. On a visit to Saddleback Church in 2003 I was interested to see that most people weren’t carrying Bibles. The reason became obvious when the sermon was preached. Six or seven versions were quoted, most of them loose paraphrases or dynamic equivalencies such as the Living Bible, the New Living Translation, The Message, the Today’s English Version, and the Contemporary English Version. It would be impossible to

follow along in one's Bible. The result is that many of the people do not bring Bibles and even those who do, have no way to test the preaching, because any biblical passage they would attempt to examine has dozens of variations.

This is a recipe for spiritual deception and an ideal environment for the promotion of heresy.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of modern textual criticism and dynamic equivalency and the smorgasbord approach to the Bible Version issue and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

PROCESS SALVATION

Influential author **Robert Webber** argued that salvation “can have a dramatic beginning or can come as a result of a process over time” (*The Divine Embrace*, p. 149).

Dallas Willard writes, “Why is it that we look upon salvation as a moment that began our religious life instead of the daily life we receive from God” (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*).

Tony Campolo writes, “My mother hoped I would have one of those dramatic ‘born-again’ experiences ... but it never worked for me. ... In my case intimacy with Christ was developed gradually over the years. ... I have learned this way of having a born-again experience from reading the Catholic mystics, especially *The Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola” (*Letters to a Young Evangelical*, pp. 25, 26, 30).

Elisabeth Elliot writes, “Those who receive Christ are given not an ‘instant kingdom’ but the ‘right to become children of God.’ ... It does not say God makes them instant children of God. It says He gives them the right to become” (*Taking Flight*, p. 12).

There are just a few examples of the heresy of process salvation that can be found in the writings of popular evangelical authors.

In contrast, Jesus described salvation as a “birth” and a “conversion” (John 3:3; Matthew 18:3). The salvations described in the book of Acts were all of the born again/conversion type. Consider the 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Paul, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer.

ECUMENISM AND AFFILIATION WITH THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH



Billy Graham has led the way in ecumenism and affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church since the 1950s. He has turned thousands of converts over to Roman Catholic and modernistic Protestant churches. His policy

was stated plainly by the vice-chairman of the organizing committee of a Vancouver, British Columbia crusade, “If Catholics step forward THERE WILL BE NO ATTEMPT TO CONVERT THEM and their names will be given to the Catholic church nearest their homes” (David Cline of Bringhouse United Church, *Vancouver Sun*, Oct. 5, 1984). In 1989, Michael Seed, Ecumenical Advisor to (Catholic) Cardinal Hume, said of Graham’s London crusade: “Those who come forward for counseling during a Mission evening in June, if they are Roman Catholic, will be directed to a Roman Catholic ‘nurture-group’ under Roman Catholic counselors in their home area” (John Ashbrook, *New Neutralism II*, p. 35).

The Roman Catholic bishop of Sao Paulo, Brazil, stood beside Graham during his 1963 crusade in that city, and

blessed those who came forward at the invitation. Graham said this illustrated that “something tremendous, an awakening of reform and revival within Christianity” was happening (*Daily Journal*, International Falls, Minnesota, Oct. 29, 1963, cited by the *New York Times*, Nov. 9, 1963). In reality, it was evidence of wretched end-time apostasy.

On his trip to Poland in 1979 Graham stood in front of the shrine of the Black Madonna of Jasna Gora in Czestochowa and greeted the Ca

tholic worshippers who were there to venerate Rome’s false Mary as Queen of Heaven.

A photograph of this was published in the February 1979 issue of *Decision* magazine, a copy of which I obtained a few years ago from the Graham Center at Wheaton College. By preaching in the Catholic churches in Poland



Graham greeting Roman Catholic venerator of the Black Madonna

and by visiting that nation’s major Mary shrine and not plainly telling the people that the Roman Catholic gospel is false and by pretending that the Catholic prelates and priests are fellow believers, Graham confused multitudes of people about the nature of the very gospel itself.

In his 1997 autobiography, Graham said his goal was not to lead people out of Roman Catholicism: “MY GOAL, I ALWAYS MADE CLEAR, WAS NOT TO PREACH AGAINST CATHOLIC BELIEFS OR TO PROSELYTIZE PEOPLE who were already committed to Christ within the Catholic Church. Rather, it was to proclaim the gospel to all



*Graham called Pope John Paul II
a “great evangelist”*

those who had never truly committed their lives to Christ” (Graham, *Just As I Am*, p. 357).

In a January 1997 interview on *Larry King Live*, Graham said that he has wonderful fellowship with Rome, is comfortable with the Vatican, and agrees with the Pope on almost everything.

KING: What do you think of the other [churches] ... like Mormonism? Catholicism? Other faiths within the Christian concept?

GRAHAM: Oh, I think I have a wonderful fellowship with all of them.

KING: You’re comfortable with Salt Lake City. You’re comfortable with the Vatican?

GRAHAM: I am very comfortable with the Vatican. I have been to see the Pope several times. In fact, the night — the day that he was inaugurated, made Pope, I was preaching in his cathedral in Krakow. I was his guest ... [and] when he was over here ... in Columbia, South Carolina ... he invited me on the platform to speak with him. I would give one talk, and he would give the other ... but I was two-thirds of the way to China...

KING: You like this Pope?

GRAHAM: I like him very much. ... He and I agree on almost everything.

In a May 30, 1997, interview, Graham told David Frost: “I feel I belong to all the churches. I’M EQUALLY AT HOME IN AN ANGLICAN OR BAPTIST OR A BRETHREN ASSEMBLY OR A ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. ... Today

we have almost 100 percent Catholic support in this country. That was not true twenty years ago. And the bishops and archbishops and the Pope are our friends” (David Frost, *Billy Graham in Conversation*, pp. 68, 143).

Franklin Graham is walking in his father’s footsteps. He told the *Indianapolis Star* that his father’s ecumenical alliance with the Catholic Church and all other denominations “was one of the smartest things his father ever did” (“Keeping it simple, safe keeps Graham on high,” *The Indianapolis Star*, Thurs., June 3, 1999, p. H2). Franklin said: “In the early years, up in Boston, the Catholic church got behind my father’s crusade. That was a first. It took back many Protestants. They didn’t know how to handle it. But it set the example. ‘If Billy Graham is willing to work with everybody, then maybe we should too’” (*The Indianapolis Star*, June 3, 1999).

M a n y R o m a n Catholics were trained as counselors for the Franklin Graham Festival in Baltimore, Maryland, July 7-9, 2006. Catholic priest Erik Arnold of the Church of the Crucifixion in Glen Burnie, Maryland, led the team of 225 Catholics who



Billy and Franklin Graham

participated as workers in the crusade. He said, “It was a great opportunity for the Christian churches to show their unity in leading people to Christ” (“Catholic Counselors Attend Billy Graham Festival,” *The Catholic Review*, July 12, 2006). The Graham organization delivered the names of 300 people to the Roman Catholics for “follow up,” and these received a letter from Cardinal William Keller “encouraging them in their faith and inviting them to get involved in the [Catholic]

church.” They will be taught, among a multitude of other heresies, that it is acceptable to pray to Mary. In fact, some of the counselors are from the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore.

Roman Catholics also participated in the Franklin Graham Festival in Winnipeg, Canada, in October 2006. The previous year the Graham team approached the Catholic bishops in Winnipeg soliciting their support and involvement (“Central Canada 2006 Franklin Graham Festival Background and Pastoral Notes for Catholic Clergy and Workers,” by Luis Melo, Director of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs, Archdiocese of Saint Boniface, n.d.). In response, each archdiocese in central Canada had official representation on the Festival Executive Committee, and various parishes provided workers to be trained as counselors and to provide follow up. The Catholics were told: “Following in the footsteps of his father, Franklin Graham will present basic Christianity. The Catholic will hear no slighting of the Church's teaching on Mary or authority, nor of papal or Episcopal prerogative; no word against the Mass/Divine Liturgy or sacraments, nor of Catholic practices or customs” (*The Catholic Review*, July 12, 2006).

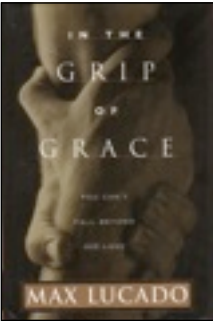
Even the most conservative Southern Baptist is a supporter of Billy and Franklin Graham and their heretical ecumenical evangelism. Consider **Al Mohler Jr.** On May 3, 2001, the Baptist Press ran an article entitled “Hundreds of Southern Students Prepare for Graham Crusade.” Mohler, president of Southern Seminary, served as the chairman of Graham's crusade. Mohler told the Baptist Press, “Nothing else has brought together the kind of ethnic and racial and denominational inclusivity as is represented in this crusade; nothing in my experience and nothing in the recent history of Louisville has brought together such a group of committed



Billy Graham and Al Mohler, Jr.

Christians for one purpose” [emphasis added]. In fact, Southern Baptist Seminary proudly hosts the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

Consider **Chuck Colson**. He is Southern Baptist and his wife is a Roman Catholic (who teaches Sunday School in a Southern Baptist church), and he attends Mass with her at times. More than 70 percent of Colson’s Prison Fellowship chaplains are Roman Catholic (*Calvary Contender*, Nov. 15, 1999). In his influential book *The Body*, Colson called on evangelicals to join forces with Catholics in the service of God. He said, “The body of Christ, in all its diversity, is created with Baptist feet, Charismatic hands, and Catholic ears--all with their eyes on Jesus.” In 1994, Colson joined Catholic priest Richard John Neuhaus and nine other Protestants and Roman Catholics as originators of “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium.”



Consider **Max Lucado**, who is not Southern Baptist but whose books are sold in LifeWay bookstores and loved by Southern Baptists everywhere. In his book *In the Grip of Grace*, he praises God for the Church of Christ (which teaches the heresy of baptismal regeneration), Pentecostals, Anglicans, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics.

Consider **Elisabeth Elliot**. She is radically ecumenical in philosophy, speaking at the Roman Catholic Franciscan University in 1989 and at Notre Dame in 1998. At a meeting on Sept. 6, 1997, at the Waukesha Wisconsin Expo Center sponsored by WVCY radio of Milwaukee, she exposed just how radically unscriptural her thinking has become when she answered the following questions:

Question: Can a person be Catholic and Christian in union?

Mrs. Elliot: Yes, we can have unity in diversity; my brother [Thomas Howard] is a Catholic and a Christian.

Question: Then is it acceptable to celebrate the [Catholic] Eucharist?

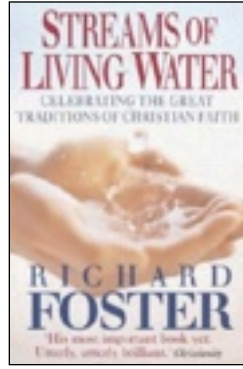
Mrs. Elliot: Yes. (E-mail from Steve Straub Waukesha, Wisconsin to David Cloud, Sept. 8, 1997).

Consider **Robert Webber**, whose books are sold in LifeWay bookstores. He writes: “A goal for evangelicals in the postmodern world is to accept diversity as a historical reality, but to seek unity in the midst of it. This perspective will allow us to see Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches as various forms of the one true church...” (*Ancient-Future Faith*, p. 85).

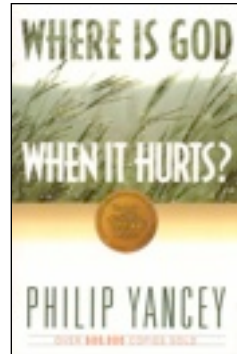
The popular author **Richard Foster** is a radical ecumenist whose vision is described like this: “I see a Catholic monk from the hills of Kentucky standing alongside a Baptist

evangelist from the streets of Los Angeles and together offering up a sacrifice of praise. I see a people” (*Streams of Living Water*, 1998, p. 274).

James Dobson, who has had a massive influence within the SBC and is not reproved even by the most conservative leaders, is an ecumenist. He has a large Roman Catholic audience and refuses to warn about Rome’s heresies. Mother Teresa was praised in his *Clubhouse* magazine. He accepted an honorary degree from the Roman Catholic Franciscan University. And he has been featured on the cover of the Roman Catholic *New Covenant* magazine, which teaches that we should pray to Mary.



We could also consider **John Maxwell and Philip Yancey**, popular writers featured in SBC bookstores. Maxwell promotes Catholic missions as a genuine form of Christianity in *Failing Forward*. Yancey claims that Roman Catholic missions are part of the “body of Christ” in *Where Is God When It Hurts?*



We could give countless more examples of the fact that the most radical ecumenism and a love for Rome are perfectly at home within the Southern Baptist Convention.

It is common within the Convention to hear Mother Teresa exalted as a great Christian, when the truth is that she was committed to a false gospel and served a false christ.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of Graham-style ecumenism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

Rather, they are bridges to ecumenism and Rome.

MASONIC PAGANISM

Of the 3.5 million Masons in the U.S., 1.3 million are Southern Baptists. Fourteen percent of SBC pastors and 18 percent of SBC deacons are Masons (*Calvary Contender*, June 1, 1993).



An attempt was made by some in the early 1990s to root Freemasonry out of the Convention, but it was decidedly rejected and this high place was left standing. The *Indiana Baptist* for March 16, 1993, reported that “fearing the loss of three million members,” the just-released Home Mission Board report leaves it to individual Southern Baptists whether to join the secret society. This is in spite of the fact that the report documented Freemasonry’s anti-Christian doctrine, that many Grand Lodges do not declare Jesus as the unique Son of God; the offensive rituals and “bloody oaths”; “implications that salvation may be obtained by one’s good works”; the heresy of universalism; pagan religions are studied in higher degrees.

Calvary Contender editor Jerry Huffman summarized the spiritual abomination of the Masonic Lodge as follows: “Freemasonry is a secret society of six million members worldwide. It often claims it is not a religion, but its writings say it is. It teaches that Jesus is not God. It has worship and funeral services, and places the Koran and ‘holy books’ of other religions on the same level as the Bible (*Calvary Contender*, May 1, 1992).

The *Scottish Rite Journal* in February 1993 stated that “Masons believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.”

(An excellent publication that documents the heresies of Freemasonry is *The Masonic Lodge: What You Need to Know: Quick Reference Guide* by Ed Decker, published by Harvest House Publisher, Eugene, OR 97402.)

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of Freemasonry and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

CULTURAL LIBERALISM

The term “cultural liberalism” was coined by Mark Driscoll (as far as I know). Also called “relevant” and “missional,” it describes an emerging approach that seeks more to engage and redeem culture than separate from it. It considers the old paths of separation, such as taboos against drinking, smoking, rock & roll, rock style dancing, body piercing, tattoos, and immodest dress as “legalistic” and “Pharisaical.”

Driscoll criticizes “hardcore fundamentalism that throws rocks at culture” (“Pastor Provocateur,” *Christianity Today*, Sept. 21, 2007). He defines himself as “relevant,” “contextual,” and “cool” (“Conference examines the emerging church,” Baptist Press, Sept. 25, 2007).

Driscoll describes Jesus as a party guy who started his ministry “as a bartender” and told “knock-knock jokes to miscreants who loved his sense of humor” (*The Radical Reformation*, p. 30).



Mark Driscoll

Mark Driscoll's church sets up a "champagne bar" at its New Year's Eve dance parties. The December 2007 party was called "Red Hot Bash2" and featured Bobby Medina and his Red Hot Band. The church auditorium was "transformed into a post club" and there was a dance contest. Can a woman be biblically modest when she is "busting a move" in modern dance fashion?

Mars Hill has "beer-brewing lessons" for men and operates the Paradox Theater which has hosted hundreds of secular rock concerts for kids.

Driscoll says that some of his sermons on sex are R-rated and that visiting youth groups have been embarrassed and walked out half-way through the message (*Confessions of a Reformation Rev.*, p. 134).

Driscoll is not Southern Baptist, but many Southern Baptists have a close relationship with him and share his philosophy. Ed Stetzer, head of LifeWay's research division and extremely influential in the Convention, joined Driscoll in a leadership position within the Acts 29 church planting network. Some of the Acts 29 missionaries are Southern Baptists.



Darrin Patrick

Darrin Patrick is an example. Founding pastor of The Journey in St. Louis, Patrick is the vice president of Acts 29. The Journey hosts a "Theology at the Bottleworks" which is advertised as "grab a brew and give your view" (*Christianity Today*, June 29, 2007). The Journey also views and discusses R-rated movies at their "film night."

Another Acts 29 church, Damascus Road Church in Marysville, Washington, has a “Men’s Poker Night” and invites men to play cards for money. They also have a “Men’s Bible and Brew” and a “Men’s Movie Night.”

Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church in California is not to be outdone in “cultural liberalism.” The following is from their website for 2005: “Our dances have become some of the most anticipated of our social events with hundreds of people attending. This Summer’s Night dance in our Worship Center promises to be the same. Professional lighting, effects and sound all blend together for a high-quality experience. Music will consist of a wide variety providing for specific dances and freestyle. And what’s a summer night without some beach music and reggae?”

Saddleback Church features nine different “worship venues” on Sundays. There is a worship style to suit every worldly taste. The Overdrive venue is “for those who like guitar-driven rock band worship in a concert-like setting that you can FEEL.” The Ohana venue comes “complete with hula and island-style music,” and on the first Saturday of every month you can take hula lessons during the potluck following the service. The Country venue features line dancing.



One of Saddleback’s rockin’ praise bands

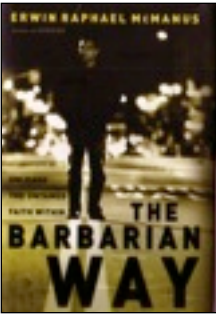
On April 17, 2005, when Rick Warren announced his P.E.A.C.E. program to Saddleback Church, he sang Jimi Hendrix’s drug-drenched song “Purple Haze” to the

congregation, accompanied by his “praise and worship” band! He said he had wanted to do that for a long time.

A Saddleback Worship concert in December 2006 featured teenage girls doing immoral dance moves that included pelvic thrusts.

A video containing a slide show from an Argentina missionary trip by Saddleback Church members featured John Lennon’s atheistic song “Imagine.” The trip, made August 1-12, 2006, was part of Rick Warren’s P.E.A.C.E. program, and the video was published on YouTube. The soundtrack uses several pieces of music, including John Lennon’s original recording of *Imagine*. The lyrics say: “Imagine there’s no heaven/ It’s easy if you try/ No hell below us/ Above us only sky.”

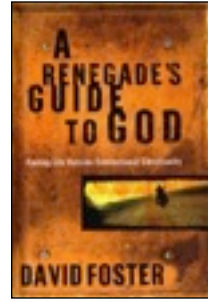
This is called “cultural liberalism” or “relativism” but it is really raunchy worldliness and it flies in the face of Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:1; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-16, and many other Scriptures. Such things would have been loudly condemned by most Baptists and Protestants in days gone by, and that is not because the old saints were “legalists.”



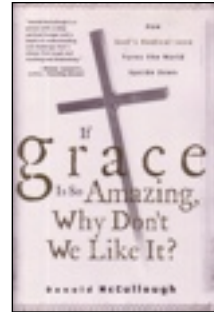
You will find many books promoting “cultural liberalism” in LifeWay bookstores. Consider these examples:

Erwin McManus, author of *The Barbarian Way*, says the new barbarian way of following Christ does not focus on “requirements” (p. 6), but the New Testament has many requirements in the path of righteousness. Those who follow the barbarian way “are not required or expected to keep in step” and “there is no forced conformity” (p. 71), but the apostle Paul wrote, “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor. 11:2). And the context refers to something as seemingly insignificant and “non-essential” as hair length!

David Foster, author of *A Renegade's Guide to God*, says, "We won't be 'told' what to do or 'commanded' how to behave." That is indeed the renegade way; it is the way that I followed before I was saved; but it is not the way of the New Testament faith.



Donald McCullough, author of *If Grace Is So Amazing Why Don't We Live Like It?*, says that he doesn't like the type of preaching that says "... don't do that, curb you appetites, reign in desire, discipline and sacrifice yourself" but this is exactly what the New Testament faith teaches us to do!



We have exposed the error of "cultural liberalism" in the book *What Is the Emerging Church?*

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of cultural liberalism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

ROCK & ROLL

We have already mentioned rock & roll, but I want to deal with this in its own section, because I consider it one of the chief idols in the Southern Baptist Convention.

It is an idol that literally permeates SBC churches, and this has long been the case. When I was growing up in an SBC church in Florida, rock & roll was coming into full bloom (I was born in 1949), and there wasn't a young person in the church that wasn't captured by its sensual siren call, and the leaders said nothing. In fact, it was the son of one of the deacons who introduced me to rock & roll records which we

spun on the player his dad had given him for that very purpose.

Rock & roll has been licentious from its inception.

“Rock music has always held seeds of the forbidden” (*Lord’s Chaos*, p. x).

“Fifties rock urged people to do whatever they wanted to do even if it meant breaking the rules” (*Buddy Holly: A Biography*).

“Rock is the total celebration of the physical” (Ted Nugent).

Whatever little ineffectual protest against rock was still found in SBC congregations in the 1960s was pretty much gone by the 1970s, and ever since it has been “rock around the clock.” For a Southern Baptist preacher or youth leader today to speak out plainly about rock and to require the church workers to separate from it would probably go over like a lead balloon and lead to the man’s dismissal.

As we have seen, Rick Warren not only does not preach against rock, he promotes it with abandon, singing Jimi



Hendrix’s drug-drenched song “Purple Haze” to the congregation, allowing teenage girls to do immoral dance moves that include pelvic thrusts, and a missionary slide show to feature John Lennon’s atheistic song “Imagine.”

This exemplifies the Southern Baptist love affair with the idol of rock & roll.

And this is in spite of the fact that rock & roll has been of the world, the flesh, and the devil ever since its inception in the 1950s and it has grown progressively evil every decade since then, which we have documented extensively in the book *Rock Music vs. the God of the Bible*.

I only need one Bible verse to tell me that rock & roll is to be rejected by the Lord's people, though I could quote many dozens. In fact, the whole tenor of Scripture--with its exaltation of God's holiness and its call for God's people to be holy--condemns rock & roll.

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

It is impossible to take that command seriously and love rock & roll at the same time. If anything in modern society can be defined as “the unfruitful works of darkness” it is rock & roll. You can't even browse through something like WalMart's music section or iTunes' pop music offerings without being confronted repeatedly with vanity, nudity, blasphemy, and the brazen flaunting of any and all of God's holy laws.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of rock & roll and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

Rather, they have built extensive bridges to this evil and have even brought it into the church to spice up the worship service.

Christian rock is an illegitimate merging of Christ with the world, and it is a direct bridge to the world. It puts people into communication with secular rock and all of its spiritual dangers. There is no separation between “Christian” rock and secular rock.

Rock music has captured the heart and soul of multitudes of professing Christians and Christian rock is the “devil's chum” toward this end.

The world's rock & roll Christianity that has permeated Southern Baptist and evangelical churches is a major reason



why two-thirds of the children in Sunday School leave by adolescence. This is the statistic given in Ken Ham's 2010 book *Already Gone*, which is based on extensive research.

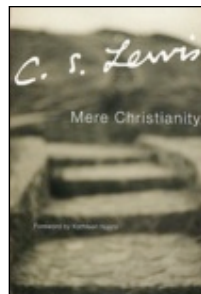
SALVATION APART FROM FAITH IN CHRIST

The heresy that men can be saved apart from faith in Christ is growing rapidly within the Southern Baptist Convention because has been allowed to remain in the high places.

Billy Graham blazed the trail in this. In an interview with *McCall's* magazine, January 1978, entitled "I Can't Play God Any More," Graham said: "I used to believe that pagans in far-off countries were lost—were going to hell—if they did not have the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them. I no longer believe that. ... I believe that there are other ways of recognizing the existence of God—through nature, for instance—and plenty of other opportunities, therefore, of saying 'yes' to God." Graham repeated this heresy in his 1993 interview with David Frost and his 1997 interview with Robert Schuller. In 1997 he said, "[God's] calling people out of the world for His name, WHETHER THEY COME FROM THE MUSLIM WORLD, OR THE BUDDHIST WORLD, OR THE CHRISTIAN WORLD OR THE NON-BELIEVING WORLD, THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN CALLED BY GOD. THEY MAY NOT EVEN KNOW THE NAME OF JESUS" (television interview of Billy Graham by Robert Schuller, broadcast in southern California, Saturday, May 31, 1997).

Some conservative SBC leaders like Al Mohler have reproved Rob Bell and his book *Love Wins*, but what is Rob Bell saying today that Billy Graham hasn't been saying for more than 30 years?

C.S. Lewis, whose writings are fervently loved among Southern Baptists and are sold in LifeWay bookstores, claimed that followers of pagan religions can be saved without faith in Jesus Christ: “There are people in other religions who are being led by God’s secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and who thus belong to Christ without knowing it” (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, p. 64). In the popular *Chronicles of Narnia* series, which has influenced countless children, Lewis taught that those who *sincerely* serve the devil (called Tash) are actually serving Christ (Aslan) and will eventually be accepted by God (*The Last Battle*, chapter 15, “Further Up and Further In”).



Popular author **Josh McDowell** says that he does not know whether “those who have never heard about Jesus will be automatically damned” (*5 Minutes with Josh*, April 1985). He believes that the Scriptures imply that “someone who has never heard of Jesus can be saved.” He says, “We do believe that every person will have an opportunity to repent and that God will not exclude anyone because he happened to be born ‘at the wrong place and time.’”

Max Lucado, whose books are sold in LifeWay bookstores and whose writings are hugely popular among Southern Baptists, preaches the same heresy. In the book *Max on Life* the following question is asked: “What about the people who have never heard of God? Will God punish them?” Lucado replies: “No, He will not. Heaven’s population includes throngs of people who learned the name



of their Savior when they awoke in their eternal home” (p. 222).

Dallas Willard says, “It is possible for someone who does not know Jesus to be saved” (*Cutting Edge* magazine, Winter 2000).

Tony Campolo says: “I am not convinced that Jesus only lives in Christians” (*The Charlie Rose Show*, cited from *Calvary Contender*, October 1, 1999). When asked by Bill Moyers on MSNBC in 1996 whether evangelicals should try to convert Jews he replied: “I am not about to make judgments about my Jewish brothers and my Muslim brothers and sisters.”

Popular author **Brennan Manning**, in his books *The Signature of Jesus* and *Gentle Revolutionaries*, describes a dream he had about judgment day. He saw Adolf Hitler and Hugh Hefner (founder of *Playboy* magazine) and himself and others going before God to be judged, but God just takes them by the hand and walks them home.

The Shack god says, “Those who love me come from every system that exists ... Buddhists ... Mormons ... Muslims ... I have no desire to make them Christian” (p. 182).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved all of these popular authors and torn down the idol of the inclusivism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

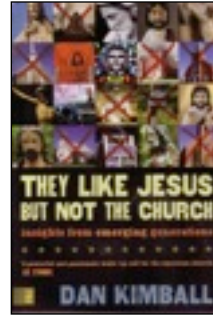
CHRISTIAN HOMOSEXUALITY

There is a rapidly growing heresy among popular “evangelical” writers to accept unrepentant homosexuals as genuine Christians and to refuse to “judge” them, and this is spreading within the Southern Baptist Convention.

Chris Seay, author of *Faith of My Fathers*, a third generation Southern Baptist pastor, says churches are not “called to be moral police” and that we should “approach homosexuals without condemnation” (“Shayne Wheeler and

Chris Seay on Homosexuals and the Church,” ChurchRelevance.com, June 19, 2007). We wonder how he reconciles this with Ephesians 5:11?

Dan Kimball says, “Because this is such a huge issue in our culture, and because all of the tension and discussion on this issue is over what the Bible says about it, we can no longer just regurgitate what we have been taught about homosexuality. ... Homosexual attraction is not something people simply choose to have, as is quite often erroneously taught from many pulpits” (*They Like Jesus but Not the Church*, pp. 137, 138).

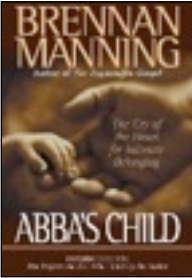


Donald McCullough says that “condemning homosexuality feels natural because about 95 percent of us could never imagine engaging in such a practice,” BUT “in a world turned upside down by grace, we must distrust whatever feels natural” (*If Grace Is So Amazing, Why Don't We Like It*, pp. 201, 202).

Philip Yancey says, “When it gets to particular matters of policy, like ordaining gay and lesbian ministers, I’m confused, like a lot of people (“Amazed by Grace,” *Whosoever* online magazine).

Tony Campolo believes that homosexuals are usually born that way, that it is not a “volitional” issue, and they should be allowed to join churches and be ordained without renouncing homosexuality as such as long as they remain “celibate.” Campolo’s wife, Peggy, “argues that the church’s traditional teaching on homosexuality is mistaken--just as the church’s traditional teaching on the role of women, slavery, and divorce is also mistaken” (“Straight But Not Narrow,” keynote address, Evangelicals Concerned, Western Region 1994). Peggy is a national leader of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, which urges Baptist congregations to be supportive of unrepentant homosexuals.

Brennan Manning identifies “homophobia” as “among the most serious and vexing moral issues of this generation” (*Abba’s Child*).



There is even a Bible for the pro-homosexual movement. *The Message* removes every clear warning against homosexuality. For example, 1 Timothy 1:10, which says in the KJV “them that defile themselves with mankind,” becomes “the irresponsible ... riding roughshod over sex.”

The Bible condemns homosexuality in no uncertain terms from the first to the last book. In the New Testament, homosexuality is called “vile affections,” “against nature,” “unseemly,” “error,” and “reprobate” (Romans 1:26-28). Any sin can be forgiven, but it must be confessed, which means that I must agree with God that it is sin. The members of the church at Corinth had participated in many forms of immorality before they came to Christ, including homosexuality, but they were converted by God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying power (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reprovved the aforementioned popular authors and torn down the idol of the Christian homosexuality and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

DOWNGRADE OF BIBLE INSPIRATION

The denial of the infallible inspiration of Scripture, which is a vile heresy that blatantly repudiates the teaching of Christ and the Apostles (e.g., Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21), is widespread within the Southern Baptist Convention in general and evangelicalism at large -- in spite of the fact that it is contrary to the denomination’s

own statement of faith and it has been *somewhat* weeded out of the seminaries through the “conservative renaissance.”

Francis Schaeffer warned in his last book, “Within evangelicalism there are a growing number who are modifying their views on the inerrancy of the Bible so that the full authority of Scripture is completely undercut” (*The Great Evangelical Disaster*, 1983).

The heresy of partial inspiration can be found in the writings of the modern textual critics that are promoted even in the most conservative of seminaries, including Southern Baptist. Five of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament are heretics who deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture. These are Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger, Arthur Voobus, Kurt and Barbara Aland, Carlo Martini, and Johannes Karavidopoulos.

Kurt Aland denied “the idea of verbal inspiration” and claimed that even the canon of Scripture is not a settled issue (*The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, pp. 30-33).

Bruce Metzger says the Pentateuch is “a matrix of myth, legend, and history,” Noah’s flood was local, Job is an ancient folktale, Isaiah was written by three men, Jonah is a “popular legend,” and 2 Peter was not written by Peter (notes in the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV*, 1973).

The heresy of partial inspiration is held by many other authors whose writings are distributed by LifeWay.

C.S. Lewis denied that the Bible is infallibly inspired and called Jonah and Job fables (“Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism,” *Christian Reflections*, edited by Walter Hooper, Eerdmans).

Rob Bell, in *Velvet Elvis*, says the New Testament epistles “aren’t first and foremost timeless truths” (p. 62) and says the apostles didn’t “claim to have the absolute word from God” (p. 57).

Donald Bloesch wrote, “The Fundamentalist idea that inspiration entails inerrancy in history and science as well as

doctrine is not claimed by the Bible” (*Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration, and Interpretation*).

Dallas Willard says, “Jesus and his words have never belonged to the categories of dogma or law, and to read them as if they did is simply to miss the point” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. xiii).

Brennan Manning says: “I am deeply distressed by what I only can call in our Christian culture the idolatry of the Scriptures. For many Christians, the Bible is not a pointer to God but God himself. In a word--bibliolatry ... I develop a nasty rash around people who speak as if mere scrutiny of its pages will reveal precisely how God thinks and precisely what God wants” (*The Signature of Jesus*).



Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who is widely praised within the Southern Baptist Convention and whose books and biographies are sold by LifeWay, denied the verbal-plenary inspiration of Scripture, believing that the Bible was only a “witness” to the Word of God and becomes the Word of God only when it “speaks” to an individual; otherwise, it was simply the word of man/men (*Testimony to Freedom*, pp. 9, 104;

Sanctorum Communio, p. 161).

Tony Campolo praises the modernist Kierkegaard for “rejecting the bibliolatry of those fundamentalists who would make the Scriptures the ultimate authority for faith” (*Partly Right*, p. 99).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved these men and torn down the idol of partial inspiration EVERYWHERE it has reared its ugly head and completely removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

THE DOWNGRADE OF HELL

The downgrade of the biblical doctrine of hell has spread widely within evangelicalism.

C.S. Lewis said, “Hell is a state of mind ... every state of mind, left to itself, every shutting up of the creature within the dungeon of its own mind--is, in the end, Hell” (*The Great Divorce*).

Billy Graham has been questioning the literal fire of hell since 1951. In 1983 he said, “I think that hell essentially is separation from God forever. And that is the worst hell that I can think of. But I think people have a hard time believing God is going to allow people to burn in literal fire forever. I think the fire that is mentioned in the Bible is a burning thirst for God that can never be quenched” (*Orlando (Florida) Sentinel*, April 10, 1983). Graham repeated this heresy in his 1983 *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists* and in an interview with *Time* magazine, November 15, 1993.

Robert Schuller said, “And what is hell? It is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God. ... A person is in hell when he has lost his self-esteem” (*Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, p. 14).

In 1987, Verdict Books published **Edward Fudge’s** *The Fire That Consumes*, a book that denies everlasting torment. The book was praised by leading evangelical leaders **Clark Pinnock** and **F.F. Bruce**. In *Christianity Today*, March 20, 1987, Pinnock said: “The fire of hell does not torment, but rather consumes the wicked.” Pinnock later called the traditional doctrine of eternal torment in Hell “an outrageous doctrine,” claiming that “a God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God.”



In 1989, **Eerdmans** published *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* by **Philip Hughes**, which promotes the false doctrine of annihilation.

John R.W. Stott, prominent British Evangelical leader and widely respected and influential among Southern Baptists and whose books are distributed by LifeWay, stated in *A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (published by InterVarsity Press) that the torment of hell is not eternal in duration.

In 1991, prominent evangelical leader **J.I. Packer**, former senior editor of *Christianity Today*, said that he does not believe that the essence of Hell is “grotesque bodily discomfort” but is rather “an inner misery of helpless remorse.”

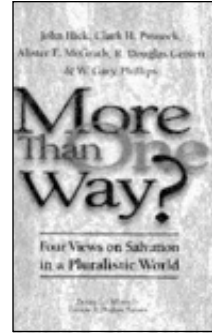
That same year, **Kenneth Kantzer**, former editor of *Christianity Today* and head of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, said that “when Jesus spoke of flames . . . these are most likely figurative warnings” (*U.S. News & World Report*, March 25, 1991).

In 1992, **Baker Books** published *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, in which John Wenham defended the doctrine of “conditional immortality.” This is the false idea that unsaved men will not exist eternally in Hell. It confuses immortality and eternal life with eternal existence.

In 1993, when drawing up a resolution on hell, the Council of Eighteen of the **General Association of Regular Baptist Churches** (GARBC) refused to state in their resolution on hell that there was “literal fire.” “Dr. Clay Nuttall was present as a witness. In his written report, he mentioned that when a man suggested ‘literal fire’ be inserted in the GARBC resolution on hell, a Council of Eighteen member said they couldn’t do that because many of the Pastors and people of the GARBC fellowship do not believe there is ‘literal fire’ in hell” (D.A. Waite, *Four Reasons for Defending the King James Bible*, 1993, pp. 20, 21).

In 1996, **Zondervan** published *More Than One Way?* which presented four “evangelical” views on “salvation in a pluralistic world.” Three of the views deny that salvation is exclusively through personal faith in Christ and that those who die without this faith will spend eternity in Hell. The book is edited by Dennis Okholm and Timothy Phillips, associate professors of theology at Wheaton College.

The editors of this book observed that a large percentage of students in evangelical colleges no longer believe that those outside of Jesus Christ are lost.

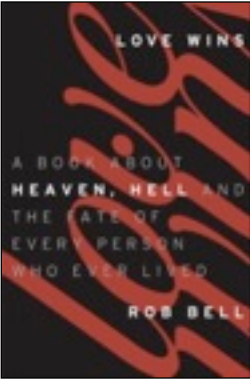


"The new willingness to subject revelation to contemporary sensibilities has eroded the theological underpinnings for a missionary faith. Hunter's questionnaire found that only two-thirds of the students in evangelical colleges believe that the sole hope for heaven is through a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Increasingly students in Christian colleges are affronted when hearing the traditional claim that salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone" (editors, p. 11).

One of the authors of this book, the aforementioned Clark Pinnock, credits C.S. Lewis as a major influence.

In April 2000, a commission of the **Evangelical Alliance of Britain** published a report titled *The Nature of Hell*, which states that Evangelicals have agreed to disagree about the doctrine of Hell. It admits that “conditional immortality is a significant minority evangelical view” claiming that “the debate on hell should be regarded as a secondary rather than a primary issue for evangelical theology.”

This reminds us that modern evangelicalism is filled with heresies and fables because it has wrongly put unity above doctrine and has renounced “separatism.” It is that simple.



In his 2011 book *Love Wins*, **Rob Bell** redefines hell as a present reality on earth. He says the statements in the Bible about hell being a place of fire and torment are mere poetry.

Of course, this is not the hell described so frequently by the Lord Jesus Christ: “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall

be quenched” (Mark 9:43).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reprovved these men and torn down the idol of the downgrade of hell and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

THEISTIC EVOLUTION

The rank heresy of Theistic Evolution has permeated evangelicalism.

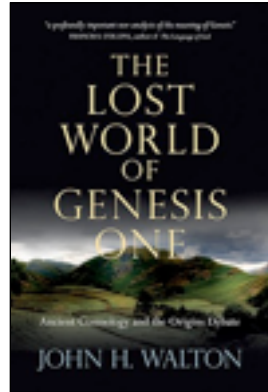
C.S. Lewis, one of evangelicalism’s greatest heroes, held to this heresy. He called the Genesis creation account a “Hebrew folk tale.” In *The Problem of Pain* Lewis said that man began as an animal that “may have existed for ages in this state before it became man.” Then God “caused to descend upon this organism a new kind of consciousness.”

Billy Graham also allowed for this heresy. He told the *United Church Observer*: “Either at a certain moment in evolution God breathed into one particular ape-man who was Adam, or God could have taken a handful of dust and created a man just like that” (“Cooperative Evangelism at Harringay,” *United Church Observer*, July 1966).

Answers in Genesis recently surveyed 200 Christian schools, including the prominent evangelical ones, and found that only 50% believe in a six-day creation. The survey results

were published in Ken Ham's 2011 book *Already Compromised*.

At **Wheaton College**, **John Walton**, professor of Old Testament, teaches heresy in his book *The Lost World of Genesis One*. He believes that Adam is the “archetypal” representative of mankind in general and the Garden of Eden is “archetypal” of “a place where God dwells.” He believes life on earth evolved over millions of years.



At **Calvin College**, **Davis Young**, emeritus professor of geology, believes “the earth has undergone a long and complex history spanning 4.5 billion years” (*Portraits of Creation*, p. 6).

Howard Van Till, emeritus professor of physics at Calvin, “the beginning of the universe took place about fifteen billion years ago” (*Portraits of Creation*, p. 105).

Daniel Harlow, associate professor of religion at Calvin College, says “Recent research in molecular biology, primatology, sociobiology and phylogenetics indicates that the species *Homo sapiens* cannot be traced back to a single pair of individuals, and that the earliest human beings did not come on the scene in anything like paradisaical physical or moral conditions. It is therefore difficult to read Genesis 1-3 as a factual account of human origins” (“After Adam: Reading Genesis in an Age of Evolutionary Science,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Sept. 2010, p. 179).

Bruce Waltke, **Knox Theological Seminary**, says “The best harmonious synthesis of the special revelation of the Bible ... and of science is the theory of theistic evolution” (*An Old Testament Theology*, 2007, pp. 202-203).

Darrell Falk of **Point Loma Nazarene University** is president of BioLogos Foundation and thus agrees with this organization's statement as follows: “Perhaps God used the

evolutionary process to equip humankind with language, free will and culture, and then revealed God's will to individuals or a community so that they might then enter into meaningful relationship with God" (<http://biologos.org>, cited from *Already Compromised*, p. 180).

William Dembski is a Southern Baptist who has taught at Baylor University and Southern Baptist Seminary and since 2006, at **Southwestern Baptist Seminary**. He believes that Adam and Eve were "human-like beings from outside the Garden" and that God transformed "their consciousness so that they" became "rational moral agents"; after this they "experienced an amnesia of their former animal life" (Dembski, *The End of Christianity*, 2009, pp. 154, 155). He says, "Dating methods, in my view, provide strong evidence for rejecting this face-value chronological reading of Genesis 4-11" ("Christian Theodicy in Light of Genesis and Modern Science," p. 49).

Karl Giberson of **Eastern Nazarene College** says, "We believe in evolution --- and God. ... The 'science' undergirding this 'young earth creationism' comes from a narrow, literalistic and relatively recent interpretation of Genesis" (*USA Today*, Op-Ed, Aug. 10, 2009).

William Lane Craig, Talbot School of Theology, says that the earth is "around 13.7 billion years" and a young earth position "is not plausible" and that he is "going with the flow of what contemporary cosmology and astrophysics supports" (Interview by Michael Coren on the *Michael Coren Show*, Feb. 6, 2009, Canadian TV).

Nancy Murphy Professor of Philosophy at **Fuller Theological Seminary**, says, "Theology does sometimes need to be revised in light of science. For example, cosmology, astronomy, geology and evolutionary biology have together called for rejecting the ancient idea of a Golden Age following by a historic fall that changed the processes of nature" ("Nature's God: An Interview with Nancy Murphy," *The Christian Century*, Dec. 27, 2005).

Alister McGrath of Regent College in British Columbia commends Nancy Murphy's approach to this issue. He wants to find ways to "allow evangelicals to affirm naturalist scientific explanations without implying the non-existence of God" ("Science and Faith at Odds?" <http://www.qideas.org/essays/science-and-faith-at-odds.aspx?page=5>, accessed May 29, 2011).

Theistic evolutionists believe that it is possible to reconcile the Bible with evolution, but in reality this is nonsense. The first 11 chapters of Genesis are clearly presented as history rather than poetry or allegory. Further, Genesis 1-11 is cited repeatedly as history by Jesus and the Apostles. In Luke 17:26-32, for example, Jesus mentions Noah, the Ark, the Flood, Lot, the destruction of Sodom by fire, and Lot's wife. Elsewhere Jesus mentions the Creation (Mk. 13:19), Adam and Eve (Mat. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-7), Cain and Abel (Mat. 23:35; Lk. 11:50-51). In Matthew 19:4-5, Christ mentions both "accounts" of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 and treats them as history. It is impossible to honor Jesus Christ as Lord and disregard His teaching. Many theistic evolutionists, such as Francis Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, claim to be "evangelical" and to honor Jesus as Lord and Saviour, but this is not consistent with the rejection of His teaching about Genesis and human origins.

Genesis 1-3 forms the historical foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If Adam was not a real man and there was no literal Fall, the gospel becomes some sort of empty metaphysical thing. Jesus' genealogy is traced from Adam (Luke 3:23-38), and there is no room here for millions of years of time. Adam is compared to Christ (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:45). It is obvious that the apostle Paul considered Adam an historical figure and Genesis as literal history.

Theistic evolution is not a small heresy.

CATHOLIC CONTEMPLATIVE MYSTICISM

The contemplative movement has spread within evangelicalism in general and the Southern Baptist Convention in particular like wildfire over the past decade. It has its own evangelical gurus, such as Richard Foster, but its methods and principles come from Roman Catholic monasticism, with its roots deeply planted in pagan philosophy.

Some of the popular Catholic mystics you will find in many evangelical bookstores are Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola (co-founder of the Jesuits who were at the forefront of the violent papal counter-reformation), Thomas Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux, Madame Guyon, Henri Nouwen, Brother Lawrence, Thomas Ryan, John Main, John Michael Talbot, Thomas Keating, Basil Pennington, Thomas Keating, and Thomas Merton.

Regardless of any biblical-sounding statements that can be pulled from the writings of these people, the fact remains that they are laden down with heresies: baptismal regeneration, works gospel, Mariolatry, papal infallibility, transubstantiation, priestcraft, purgatory, monasticism, asceticism, celibacy, veneration of relics, allegoricalism, to name a few.

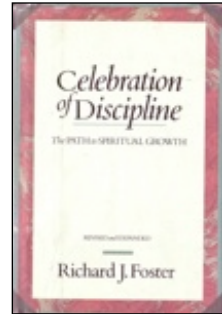
The mystical “spirituality” that is so popular in evangelical and charismatic circles today is a yearning for an experiential relationship with God that downplays the role of faith and Scripture (at least in practice) and that exalts “transcendental” experiences. Biblical prayer is talking with God; contemplative prayer is silent meditation “beyond thought” and “centering” and other such things. Biblical Bible study is analyzing and meditating upon the literal truth of the Scripture; contemplative spirituality focuses on a “deeper meaning”; it is more allegorical and “transcendental” than literal.

Popular contemplative practices include Centering Prayer which involves emptying the mind of conscious thoughts about God with the objective of entering into a non-verbal experiential union with God in the center of one's being. Chanting is often used to drive away thoughts.

Visualization Prayer is trying to imagine oneself in a Biblical scene, such as talking to baby Jesus in the manger.

The Jesus Prayer consists of repeating the phrase "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me."

The most influential promoter of contemplative mysticism is Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*. He promotes the aforementioned Catholic mystics. He claims that through meditation one can "center" deep within oneself and "actually encounter the living Christ" and "be addressed by his voice" (*Celebration of Discipline*, p. 26). He says that the contemplative practitioner can enter "into a deep inner communion with the Father where you look at Him and He looks at you" (p. 27). In the first edition of his book, Foster promoted a visualization practice where the individual leaves his body and goes "deep into outer space" into the very "presence of the eternal Creator" and there listens carefully and gets instruction directly from God (*Celebration of Discipline*, 1978 edition, pp. 27-28).



Contemplative mysticism is spreading everywhere in the Southern Baptist Convention and within evangelicalism in general.

It is promoted in "spirituality" courses at **Southern Baptist schools**. On a visit to Golden Gate Theological Seminary in February 2000, I noticed that most of the required reading for the course on "Classics of Church Devotion" are books by Roman Catholic mystics, including Ignatius of Loyola, Thomas Merton, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Teresa of Avila.

Contemplative mysticism is promoted by influential Southern Baptist pastors, such as **Rick Warren** of Saddleback Church.

Contemplative mysticism is promoted by **state associations** affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, including the Grand Valley Baptist Association of Grand Junction, Colorado, and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, as documented by Lighthouse Trails ministry.

Evangelical authors who promote contemplative mysticism include Bill Hybels of Willow Creek, Chuck Swindoll, David Jeremiah, Beth Moore, Mark Driscoll, Max Lucado, Philip Yancey, Eugene Peterson, Lee Strobel and his son Kyle.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of contemplative mysticism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

CHARISMATIC HERESY

Though a few churches and individual missionaries have been put out of the Southern Baptist Convention for charismatic doctrine and practice, many others remain, and the number is increasing.

The growing acceptance of charismaticism within the SBC reflects what is happening in evangelicalism at large. Prior to the 1970s, the Pentecostal movement was largely rejected. Arno Gaebelin said he was convinced the movement “is not of God” (*Our Hope*, July 1907). G. Campbell Morgan called Azusa Street Pentecostalism “the last vomit of Satan.” R.A. Torrey said the movement is “emphatically not of God.” Merrill Unger represented the predominant view in the 1960s when he called the charismatic movement “widespread confusion.” He said: “When the Word of God is given preeminence and when sound Bible doctrine, especially in

the sphere of the theology of the Holy Spirit is stressed and made the test of experience, the claims of charismatic Christianity will be rejected.”

The stance toward the charismatic movement has changed dramatically since the 1970s, because of the leaven of spiritual compromise within evangelicalism.

In March 1972, *Christianity Today* observed: “A new era of the Spirit has begun. The charismatic experience moves Christians far beyond *glossalalia* [tongues speaking]. ... There is light on the horizon. An evangelical renaissance is becoming visible along the Christian highway, from the frontiers of the sects to the high places of the Roman Catholic communion. This appears to be one of the most strategic moments in the church’s history.”



By the 1970s, “the majority of younger evangelicals in the Church of England were charismatic” (Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, p. 135). By 1987, the *Evangelical Times* in England observed “that a large--some would say the greater--part of the evangelical world is in some measure influenced by the various branches of the charismatic scene.” By 1999, the Evangelical Alliance in England included Pentecostals at every level of leadership, and “no group on the council is opposed to the Pentecostal position” (*Renewal*, March 1999). The same was true in the United States. By 1992, 80% of the membership of the National Association of Evangelicals was Pentecostal, up from 62% in 1987, and the president of the NAE, Don Argue, belonged to the Assemblies of God. Roughly half of the attendees at Billy Graham’s 1983 Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam were Pentecostal or Charismatic.

In 1989 J.I. Packer, a professor at Regent College and a senior editor of *Christianity Today*, said the Charismatic movement “must be adjudged a work of God” (*Calvary Contender*, July 15, 1989). He said, “Sharing charismatic experience ... is often declared ... to unify Protestants and Roman Catholics at a deeper level than that at which their doctrine divides them. This, if so, gives charismaticism great ecumenical significance.”

Many of the evangelicals that have adopted a positive view of charismatic phenomena do not call themselves charismatic. The term “third wave” was coined in the 1980s by Fuller Seminary professor Peter Wagner.

We document the spread of the charismatic movement within the SBC in the report “Why I Am Not Southern Baptist.” Influential men in this move include Jack Taylor, Ron Phillips, Gary Folds, all of whom accepted the unscriptural nonsense at the Toronto Airport Church in Ontario and/or at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. This “revival” took the form of barking like a dog and roaring like a lion, electric shocks, weird shaking, and other bizarre experiences. Ron Phillips, pastor of Abba’s House in Tennessee, counts more than 500 Southern Baptist churches in his charismatic network.



*Jack Hayford at
St. Louis in 2000*

The charismatic movement features **gibberish tongues**. Even Jack Hayford, who has been called “the gold standard of Pentecostalism” by *Christianity Today*, promotes this. Biblical tongues were miraculous and were real languages and were given as a sign to the unbelieving Jewish nation, but charismatic tongues are gibberish words that can be learned. When I heard Hayford speak at the ecumenical St. Louis 2000 conference, which I

attended with press credentials, he said his daughter came to him one day concerned that her “tongues” were real. He told her, “Don’t worry. You didn’t learn to speak all at once when you were little, and you likewise have to start out with baby tongues.”

The charismatic movement accepts **visions and voices** that lead contrary to God’s Word. Hayford claims that one day he was driving by a Roman Catholic Church and God spoke to him and said, “Don’t judge my church.” That was not God; it was a demon!

The charismatic movement practices the foolishness of “**spirit slaying**,” which is also called Holy Spirit glue or carpet time. This is a wide spread practice today.

The charismatic movement practices “**holy laughter**.” Rodney Howard-Browne calls himself the “Holy Ghost Bartender,” and people who attend his meetings laugh hysterically, believing that God is giving them this gift. The “holy laughter” has been practiced at the aforementioned Toronto Airport Church and many other places.

The charismatic movement is more **experience-oriented** than Bible-oriented. People are taught not to test everything carefully with Scripture. That is criticized as “putting God in a box.” For example, at John Wimber’s Anaheim Vineyard church in 1994, the speaker said, “In a moment I’m going to call down the Spirit ... above all, don’t try to rationally evaluate the things you see.”

The charismatic movement is permeated with **Word-Faith heresy** promoted by prominent names such as Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Benny Hinn, David Yonggi Cho, Paul Crouch, Rod Parsley, Fred Price, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Marilyn Hickey, and Morris Cerullo. At the heart of the Word-Faith heresy is the doctrine that our words have creating power. “Your confession of faith in God’s Word will bring healing or whatever it is you need from God into the present tense and make it a reality in your life” (Kenneth Hagin, *The Word of Faith*).



Rodney Howard-Browne, the “Holy Ghost Bartender”

We document the heresies of the movement in the book *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements: The History and Error*.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of the charismatic heresies and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

POSITIVE THINKING

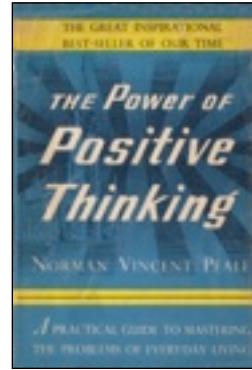
The positive thinking doctrine, which was launched in the 1950s by **Norman Vincent Peale** and is based on the New Thought doctrines that preceded him, is rife with New Age principles.

And Peale was immensely influential within the Southern Baptist Convention. I recall seeing Peale’s *Guideposts* magazine everywhere when I was growing up in the

Convention, and I never heard a warning about Peale's doctrine.

Peale's positive-thinking gospel was an unholy mixture of humanistic psychology, eastern religion, and Bible.

The first paragraph of *The Power of Positive Thinking* begins with the words, "Believe in yourself! ... this book will help you believe in yourself and release your inner powers."



Peale was a promoter of the heresy of "**positive imaging**." He claimed that mental imaging worked for anyone, regardless of religious faith. A group of Merrill Lynch real estate associates gave Peale a standing ovation after he made the following statement at a motivational seminar:

"I believe, and I've tested it out in so many cases that I'm sure of its validity, that if a person has a business and images that business at a certain level and fights off his doubts ... it will come out that way--all because of the power of the positive image" (Jeanne Pugh, "The Eternal Optimist," *St. Petersburg Times*, St. Petersburg, Florida, Religion Section, June 8, 1985).

This doctrine has been a part of the New Age from its inception. Man has the power to accomplish whatever he desires by learning how to visualize it into reality.

In an interview with Phil Donahue in 1984, Peale said: "It's not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God; I have mine. ... I've been to the Shinto shrines, and God is everywhere" (*Sword of the Lord*, Dec. 14, 1984).

In an interview with *USA Today* he said, "I don't believe God spends his time revenging himself on people. These things [AIDS, herpes] come about because of scientific methodology. God is too big to spend his time in revenge" (July 22, 1983).

Peale said, "People are inherently good--the bad reactions aren't basic. Every human being is a child of God and has more good in him than evil--but circumstances and associates can step up the bad and reduce the good. I've got great faith in the essential fairness and decency--you may say goodness--of the human being" (*Modern Maturity* magazine, December-January 1975-76).

Peale denied that Jesus is God. He told *Modern Maturity* magazine, "I like to describe him as ... the nearest thing to God."

Peale even promoted the false christ that Jane Palzere and Anna Brown encountered through occultic automatic writing. He endorsed their book *The Jesus Letters*, which professes to be messages from Jesus. Yet this "Jesus" said such things as, "God does not see evil; He sees only souls at different levels of awareness."

Of this "Jesus," Peale wrote the following amazing endorsement: "You will bless many by this truly inspired book. ... It little matters if these writings come from Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus of Jane [Jane Palzere] they are all the same consciousness and that consciousness is God. I am a part of God, and Jane and Anna are part of that same God" (advertisement for *The Jesus Letters and Your Healing Spirit*)

SCHULLER'S SELF-ESTEEMISM

Robert Schuller, pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in southern California, has been called "the Norman Vincent Peale of the West."

Schuller reinterprets the doctrines of God's Word to conform to his heretical self-esteem philosophy. To Schuller, sin is the lack of self-esteem. His christ is "self-esteem incarnate." His gospel is to replace negative self-concepts with positive ones. To Schuller, man is not a sinner. Schuller is universalist, believing that all men are the children of God.

Consider some excerpts from Schuller's popular book *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*:

"Positive Christianity does not hold to human depravity, but to human inability" (p. 67).

"To be born again means that we must be changed from a negative to a positive self-image" (p. 68).

"Essentially, if Christianity is to succeed in the next millennium, it must cease to be a negative religion and must become positive" (p. 104).

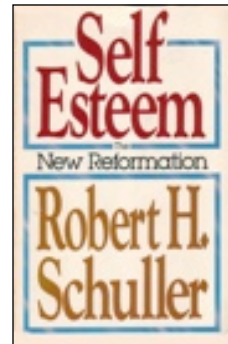
"Christ is the Ideal One, for he was self-esteem incarnate" (p. 135).

Schuller has featured prominent New Agers on his television program, such as Gerald Jampolsky, who says "there is no sin" and "the recognition of God is the recognition of yourself" (Warren Smith, "Rethinking Robert Schuller" *WorldNetDaily*, October 30, 2007).

In spite of the wretched heresies of Peale and Schuller, the Southern Baptist Billy Graham had a non-critical relationship with them and helped raise their status in the evangelical world.

Graham invited Peale to give the benediction at a crusade in New York in 1956, and at a National Council of Churches luncheon on December 6, 1966, Graham said, "I don't know anyone who has done more for the kingdom of God than Norman and Ruth Peale, or have meant any more in my life--the encouragement they have given me" (Hayes Minnick, Bible for Today publication #565, p. 28).

Graham has frequently appeared with and praised Schuller. In 1983, Schuller sat in the front row of distinguished guests invited to honor Graham's 65th birthday. In 1986, Schuller



was invited by Graham to speak at the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam. Other featured speakers included some of today's most prominent evangelical leaders, including Bill Bright, Leighton Ford, and Luis Palau. Schuller was also featured on the platform of Graham's Atlanta Crusade in 1994.

Billy Graham has constantly acted as a bridge to heresies and high places, yet if any prophet Jehu lifts a voice against

t h i s w r e t c h e d
compromise (2 Chron. 19:2), he is immediately maligned.



Billy Graham and Robert Schuller

Conservative Southern Baptist leader W.A. Criswell, considered a “conservative of the conservatives,” endorsed Schuller’s ministry in 1981 in an ad in *Christianity Today’s*

Leadership magazine. He said, “I know Dr. Schuller personally. He’s my good friend. I’ve spoken on his platform. I’m well acquainted with his ministry. If you want to develop fruitful evangelism in your church; if you want your laity to experience positive motivation and ministry fulfilling training, then I know, without a doubt, that you will greatly benefit from the Robert Schuller Film Workshop.” Criswell endorsed Schuller’s 1996 autobiography, *My Soul’s Adventure with God*.

A year prior to that, Criswell endorsed a book by Norman Vincent Peale.

Southern Baptist pastor Rick Warren has spoken at Schuller’s conferences and has never issued a word of warning about the man.

Because of the failure to warn on the part of the men who should be spiritual and doctrinal watch dogs, multitudes have

been deceived by Peale and Schuller's winsomeness, their use of Bible terminology, the seeming innocence of their message, and its attractive positive slant. None of the popular evangelical or Southern Baptist publications are willing to lift a voice of clear warning about the Peales and Schullers of our time.

As a result, end-time deception continues to spread across the land.

DOBSON'S SELF-ESTEEMISM

Robert Schuller didn't invent self-esteemism. It originated in humanistic psychology, and it has been spread through the Southern Baptist Convention by the Christian counseling movement, with **James Dobson** at the forefront.

According to the psychology doctrine of self-esteem, man must pursue his own self-love or self-confidence for the sake of psychological wholeness, and anything that damages self-esteem is wrong. The path to the development of self-esteem is psychological counseling.

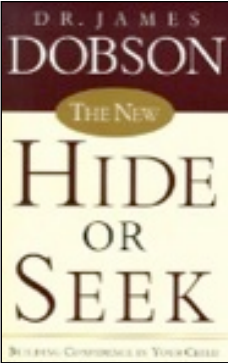
This doctrine is derived from humanistic/atheistic psychologists.

Atheist Abraham Maslow emphasized the need for self-esteem in his popular books. Rejecting the doctrine of the Fall, he believed that man is basically good and there is "a positive, self-actualising force within each person that is struggling to assert itself" (Williams, *The Dark Side*, p. 114). If it is "permitted to guide our life, we grow healthy, fruitful, and happy" (*Motivation and Personality*, 1970, p. 122).

The self-esteem doctrine was borrowed from humanistic God haters like Maslow and Carl Rogers and has been promoted far and wide in Christian circles by a slew of Christian psychologists, with James Dobson leading the way.

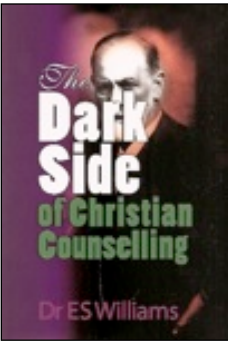
Dobson's book *Hide or Seek* was designed "to formulate a well-defined philosophy--and approach to child rearing -- that will contribute to self-esteem from infancy onwards." He

says, "... lack of self-esteem is a threat to the entire human family, affecting children, adolescents, the elderly, all socioeconomic levels of society, and each race and ethnic culture" (*What Wives Wish*, p. 24). Dobson even believes that lack of self-esteem is the cause of every social ill (*Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions about Confident, Healthy Families*, p. 67).



To the contrary, the Bible lays the ills of society at the feet of fallen man and his rebellion against God. Jesus taught that murder, adultery, fornication, covetousness, deceit, theft, and such come from man's wicked heart (Mark 7:21-23).

The self-esteem doctrine downplays and redefines sin. We have seen that the very popular and influential Robert Schuller, who was a pioneer in the "Christian" self-esteem movement, defines sin as "any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem" (*Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, p. 14).



Dr. E.S. Williams warns: "In all that has been written and taught about self-esteem, both Christian and secular, there is never any suggestion that the root cause of man's low self-esteem is God's moral law which condemns sinful behaviour" (*The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 140).

The self-esteem movement twists Scripture out of context. A major proof-text is Matthew 22:39, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is interpreted to mean that man needs to love himself just as he needs to love his neighbor, but Christ was not saying there is a need for self-love and He was not encouraging any sort of self-esteem program. He was

saying that *men already love themselves!* Paul said the same thing in Ephesians 5:29, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh...” The fallen man’s problem is not a lack of self-esteem but far too much of it and a gross lack of God-esteem! Fallen man is an idolater who worships himself in the place of the Almighty Creator. The very essence of sin is that we’ve “turned every one to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6).

The modern self-esteem doctrine is heresy and apostasy. The very first characteristic of end-time apostasy is that “men shall be lovers of their own selves” (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of the psychology self-esteemism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

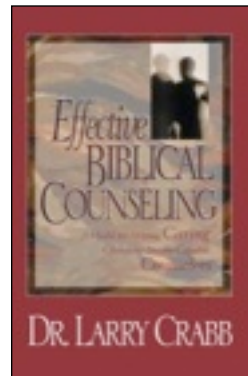
UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

The heresy of self-esteem is intimately associated with that of unconditional love. Supposedly, to have the highest self-esteem we must see God as a merciful Father who “accepts us totally, exactly as we are” (Chris Leger and Wendy Bray, *Insight into Self-Esteem*, 2006, p. 12).

Larry Crabb says, “I am completely acceptable to him regardless of my behavior” (*Effective Biblical Counseling*, 1977, p. 70).

Unconditional love is promoted by Rick Warren, James Dobson, Philip Yancy, Joyce Meyer, Larry Crabb, Gary Smalley, Selwyn Hughes, David Seamands, Gary Chapman, Charles Stanley, and a host of other popular Christian leaders and authors.

Like the doctrine of self-esteem, the doctrine of unconditional love was developed by the atheistic fathers of the psychological counseling movement



and New Agers. Erik Fromm was the first to use the phrase “unconditional love,” while Carl Rogers coined the term “unconditional positive regard,” by which “he meant the granting of love and approval regardless of an individual’s behaviour” (E.S. Williams, *Christ or Therapy?* pp. 65, 66).

The doctrine of unconditional love is a major theme of New Age thought. The god of unconditional love puts no obligations on people and does not punish sin. Roy Klienwachter says, “Unconditional love means unconditional freedom. ... Retribution is a lie. ... Anyone who tells you different, is not coming from unconditional love” (*Unconditional Love*, 2008). Deepak Choprah says, “A God capable of being pleased and displeased isn’t a God of grace, since the essence of grace is unconditional love” (*The Third Jesus*, p. 54).

Unconditional love is a theme of the occult. Consider Aleister Crowley, who has had a massive influence on the rock & roll culture and whose photo appeared on the cover of the Beatles’ *Sargent Pepper’s* album. Crowley’s “love” was unconditional love with no obligations.

Unconditional love is also a fundamental principle of the emerging church. In *An Emerging Church Primer* Justin Taylor says we must proclaim “God’s message of unconditional love.”

The God of unconditional love is not the God of Scripture. The love of the sovereign Creator God is unfathomable and unmerited, but not unconditional. God’s love is demonstrated in Christ and the Cross and to benefit from God’s love one must repent and receive Christ as Lord and Saviour (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 13:3; John 3:36; 14:21). Repent or perish is *not* the message of unconditional love!

The doctrine of unconditional love as typically defined denies the absolute holiness of God, the fall of man, the necessity of the atonement of Christ, the requirement of the new birth, God’s call to repentance and faith, the existence of eternal hell for those outside of Christ, and God’s call to holy

living in the Christian life (e.g., Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 1:15-16). Though the born again believer is accepted in Christ and eternally safe because of the perfect Atonement, he is subject to discipline in this present life and loss at the judgment seat of Christ if he walks in unrepentant carnality and disobedience. There is even a sin unto death (1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 John 5:17).

There are some who preach unconditional love that say that they believe the aforementioned Bible doctrines, but the message of unconditional love is contradictory to these truths and those who try to reconcile them are living in a fantasy world.

The god of self-esteem and unconditional love is not the God of Scripture; he is the god of end-time apostasy. As Dr. E.S. Williams observes:

“The concept of unconditional love only exists in a mythological world in which there is no sin, no evil and no law, in which people are free to live as they like without fear of judgment and punishment. In the real world, unconditional love is no more and no less than licentiousness -- an attitude that denies the accepted rules and morals that govern human behaviour. It is an attitude that allows us to do what we want without sanction or control. It is the essential message of pagan morality and New Age salvation” (Williams, *Christ or Therapy?* p. 69).

“The permissive god of ‘Christian’ self-esteem dogma longs to satisfy the needs and desires of the human heart. He delights in meeting our needs and likes to make us feel good about ourselves, no matter what. He is careful not to set standards too high or too difficult for us to meet. He is satisfied with our behaviour so long as we do our best. He is a god who is ‘mighty to save’ mankind from a lifetime cycle of low self-esteem. And if the truth were known, he does not really hate evil and sin all that much, for he accepts us totally, exactly as we are. He has commanded us to love ourselves and he loves everybody unconditionally no matter

how they behave” (Williams, *The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 141).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of unconditional love and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

UNCONDITIONAL FORGIVENESS

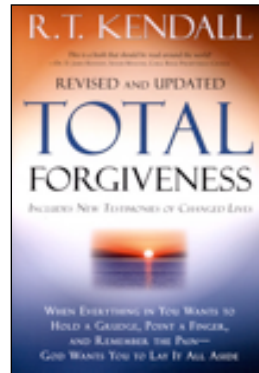
Closely associated with the heresy of unconditional love is that of unconditional forgiveness. Over the past two decades it has become a major element of the psychological counseling movement, which has permeated the Southern Baptist Convention in particular and evangelicalism in general. A form of therapy, it is not so much about reconciliation between people as it is about personal inner healing and self-esteem.

A major force behind the spread of therapeutic forgiveness is the Templeton Foundation, which is New Age to the core. Though a committed Presbyterian, John Templeton was an evolutionist, pantheist, and universalist. He said, “God is all of you and you are a little part of him,” and, “No one should say that God can be reached by only one path” (*The Humble Approach*, pp. 38, 55).

Templeton has been recommended by Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Schuller, and Rick Warren.

Since the 1990s, the Templeton Foundation has funded “scientific studies” on the power of forgiveness, and there has been an associated explosion of teaching on this subject, such as Colin Tipping’s *Radical Forgiveness* (1997); Robert Enright’s *Forgiveness Is a Choice* (2001); Fred Luskin’s *Forgive for Good* (2002); and Martin Seligman’s *Authentic Happiness* (2002). Many of these are New Age in perspective. Tipping’s mission is “to raise the consciousness of the planet through forgiveness.”

In light of the wholesale “repudiation of separatism” that characterizes modern evangelicalism, it is not surprising that Christian counselors have been quick to jump on the unconditional forgiveness bandwagon. Among others there is *The Choosing to Forgive Workbook* by Frank Minirth and Les Carter, *The New Freedom of Forgiveness* (2000) by David Augsburger, *Total Forgiveness* (2002) by R.T. Kendall, and *Choosing Forgiveness* (2006) by Nancy Leigh DeMoss.



The movement of therapeutic forgiveness is all about self. It is unconditional forgiveness for *my* sake, to help *me* feel good about *myself*, to have personal peace of mind, to have personal self-esteem and psychological wholeness.

Like unconditional love, unconditional forgiveness is unscriptural. Biblical forgiveness is predicated on confession and repentance.

This is true vertically, between man and God. God’s forgiveness is not unconditional; it required the payment of a great price on God’s part (the giving of His Son on the Cross) and obtaining God’s forgiveness requires repentance. Jesus twice said, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).

This is also true with forgiveness at the horizontal level, forgiveness between men. We are to be quick to forgive and we are to love our enemies, but this does not mean that we are to forgive unconditionally. As Jesus said: “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and IF HE REPENT, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I REPENT; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

The apostle Paul did not unconditionally forgive Alexander the Coppersmith (2 Tim. 4:14) or the heretics at Galatia (Gal. 5:7-10). He did not teach the unconditional forgiveness for those who sin against the testimony of Christ in the church (1 Corinthians 5).

Not only is unconditional forgiveness wrong, it is hurtful. As Dr. E.S. Williams writes:

“Nowhere in Scripture is the Christian told to unconditionally forgive an unbeliever who sins against him. To do so is only a meaningless gesture; for by what authority does a Christian forgive sin? This only leads to a false view of forgiveness, and the world will gain the idea that Christians practise cheap forgiveness, like New Age adherents. For Christians to offer unconditional forgiveness to all and sundry is to make a mockery of the Cross of Christ. ... The moral wrongness of unconditional forgiveness is that it condones sin and wrongdoing. The wrongdoer is not held accountable for his sin, but actually encouraged to believe that it is a light matter” (*Christ or Therapy?* pp. 99, 100).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of unconditional forgiveness and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

DENYING THE SUBSTITUTIONARY BLOOD ATONEMENT

The Bible plainly states that that Christ shed His blood and died to satisfy the penalty of God’s holy Law, but many within evangelicalism today question, reinterpret, and outright deny this.

C.S. Lewis called the doctrine of the atonement a non-essential matter and said you can believe “any formula that appeals” (*Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, p. 182).

Brennan Manning, “[T]he god whose moods alternate between graciousness and fierce anger ... the god who exacts the last drop of blood from his Son so that his just anger, evoked by sin, may be appeased, is not the God revealed by and in Jesus Christ. And if he is not the God of Jesus, he does not exist” (*Above All*, p. 58-59; the foreword to this book is written by popular CCM artist Michael W. Smith).



Brennan Manning

Dallas Willard calls the doctrine of substitutionary atonement a “theory” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 42). This is one reason why **Brian McLaren** likes Willard. Addressing the issue of the atonement, McLaren says:

“I think the gospel is a many faceted diamond, and atonement is only one facet, and legal models of atonement (which predominate in western Christianity) are only one small portion of that one facet. Dallas Willard also addresses this issue in ‘The Divine Conspiracy.’ Atonement-centered understandings of the gospel, he says, create vampire Christians who want Jesus for his blood and little else. He calls us to move beyond a ‘gospel of sin management’--to the gospel of the kingdom of God. So, rather than focusing on an alternative theory of atonement, I’d suggest we ponder the meaning and mission of the kingdom of God” (<http://www.brianmclaren.net/archives/000149.html>).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of the rejection of the substitutionary atonement and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

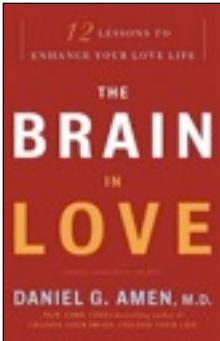
NEW AGE

We could point to many ways that New Age philosophy and techniques are spreading through the Southern Baptist Convention.

One is through the popularity of “**holistic health care.**”

Prominent Southern Baptist pastor Rick Warren has recently promoted three out-and-out New Age practitioners: Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, and Mark Hyman. They designed Warren’s program called “The Daniel Plan.”

Daniel Amen teaches Eastern meditation and deals in pop psychology and self-help. Both Oz and Amen promote Reiki,



which is an occultic practice that allegedly channels “universal healing energy.” Amen told Rick Warren that he intends to help Saddleback church members to have good “brain health.” He has written several books on this subject.

The Brain in Love promotes Hindu tantra, which is the pagan concept of combining yogic medication with sex. *Making a Good Brain Great* promotes Hindu-style meditation through the vain repetition of the alleged primal sounds saa, taa, naa, maa, aa. Mark Hyman also promotes meditation based on Buddhist principles.

After Billy Graham, Rick Warren is the most influential Southern Baptist preacher alive. His unqualified recommendation of these New Age practitioners will doubtless result in spiritual shipwreck for many people.

Warren and other Southern Baptists also associate with the New Age through their relationship with **Leonard Sweet**, who promotes a New Age universalist spirituality that he calls New Light and “the Christ consciousness.” He describes it in terms of “the union of the human with the divine” which is

the “center feature of all the world’s religions” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 235). He says it was experienced by Mohammed, Moses, and Krishna. He says that some of the “New Light leaders” that have led him into this new thinking are Matthew Fox, M. Scott Peck, Willis Harman, and Ken Wilber, all of whom believe in the divinity of man, plus the Catholic-Buddhist monk Thomas Merton. Warren recommends Sweet’s book *Soul Tsunami* (his recommendation is printed on the cover).



Warren and Sweet collaborated on an audio set entitled *Tides of Change*, and Sweet spoke at Saddleback Church in January 2008 for a small groups training conference.

In October 2001, Sweet spoke for the Southern Baptist Convention’s LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville.

Brennan Manning, a popular LifeWay author, also promotes New Age writings. In *Abba’s Child*, Manning recommends the writings of Beatrice Bruteau, who believes that God is within every human being. She says that each person can say, “I AM,” which is a name for Almighty God.

Manning quotes David Steindl-Rast approvingly in *The Signature of Jesus* (pp. 210, 213-214). Steindl-Rast, a contemplative interfaith Roman Catholic priest, said: “Envision the great religious traditions arranged on the circumference of a circle. At their mystical core they all say the same thing, but with different emphasis” (“Heroic Virtue,” *Gnosis*, Summer 1992).

Manning quotes Matthew Fox approvingly in at least two of his books, *Lion and Lamb* (p. 135) and *A Stranger to Self-Hatred* (pp. 113, 124). Fox says: “God is a great underground river, and there are many wells into that river. There’s a Taoist well, a Buddhist well, a Jewish well, a Muslim well, a Christian well, a Goddess well, the Native wells--many wells

that humans have dug to get into that river, but friends, there's only one river; the living waters of wisdom" (quoted from John Caddock, "What Is Contemplative Spirituality," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Autumn 1997).

Popular writer **Ken Blanchard** encourages borrowing from pagan religions. He says, "Our folks get to hear words of wisdom from great prophets and spiritual leaders like Buddha, Mohammed ... Yogananda and the Dalai Lama" (foreword to *What Would Buddha Do at Work?* 2001). Blanchard has strong ties with the New Age and recommends many New Age books. For example, he wrote the foreword to the 2007 edition of Jim Ballard's book *Little Wave and Old Swell*, which is inspired by Hindu guru Paramahansa Yogananda. This book is designed to teach children that God is all and man is one with God. In the foreword Blanchard makes the amazing statement: "Yogananda loved Jesus, and Jesus would have loved Yogananda." This is nonsense. I was a disciple of Yogananda before I was saved, and there is no doubt that he did NOT love the Jesus of the Bible! I renounced Yogananda and his false christ after I was born again in 1973.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved these men and others like them and torn down every New Age idol and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

FALSE GODS AND GODDESSES

Not only is the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large filled with heresies and fables, there is a rapid move toward acceptance of false gods and even goddess worship.

Consider *The Shack*.

William Paul Young's novel *The Shack* has resonated widely among Southern Baptists, even though it presents God as a male/female non-judgmental being.

Though fictional, the book's objective is the redefinition of God. It is about a man who becomes bitter at God after his daughter is murdered and has a life-changing experience in the very shack where the murder occurred; but the God he encounters is most definitely *not* the God of the Bible. Young depicts God the Father as a black woman who loves rock & roll, as well as a man with gray hair and a pony tail. Young's male/female god/goddess is the god of the



emerging church. He is cool, loves rock & roll, is non-judgmental, does not exercise wrath toward sin, does not send unbelievers to an eternal fiery hell, does not require repentance and the new birth, and puts no obligations on people. (For documentation see “The Shack’s Cool God” at the Way of Life web site, www.wayoflife.org.)

I don't know if this is still the case, but I do know that in the past LifeWay bookstores sold *The Shack* with only a mild, vague, meaningless warning.

The message and god/goddess of *The Shack* has resonated far and wide within evangelicalism. William Paul Young was promoted at the National Pastors Conference in San Diego in 2009, which was sponsored by Zondervan and InterVarsity Fellowship. A large percentage of the preachers in attendance had read the book, and its author was enthusiastically received. He was interviewed in a general session by Andy Crouch of *Christianity Today*. There was not a hint of concern about his theology or goddess worship.

Many Southern Baptists love *The Shack*, which is irrefutable evidence of the deep spiritual apostasy that exists in that Convention. I received the following frightful

testimony from a pastor who came out of the Convention in 1996:

“Concerning the question about ‘The Shack,’ I have been shocked at the willingness of many of my former SBC friends and acquaintances to receive it as a ‘great’ book. As you know, and have taught, the book presents a picture of ‘God’ that is not biblical. The ready acceptance of this book by the vast majority of those I know, is indicative of a serious lack of discernment. It seems that spiritual discernment is a rapidly dissipating quality today. I have questioned several folk on their acceptance of ‘The Shack’ and its false teaching. Their response has been, ‘But it teaches a good truth about how God loves us.’ This is characteristic of the modern church-growth movement that focuses solely on the ‘love of God,’ and relegates His holiness, righteousness and judgments to the ‘unimportant’” (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

William Paul Young and his novel is not the only example of the promotion of false gods within the SBC and evangelicalism today. In fact, many of the practitioners of contemplative spirituality are led to a pagan concept of God.



Rob Bell at the National Pastors Conference 2009, sponsored by Zondervan and InterVarsity

Norman Vincent Peale described God as a New Age god of energy: “Who is God? ... God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized” (*You Can If You Think You Can*).

In his 2011 book *Love Wins*, **Rob Bell** says that the traditional view of hell presents a “cheap view of

God” (Kindle location 47-60, 2154-2180). He says there is something wrong with this God and calls Him “terrifying and traumatizing and unbearable” (location 1273-1287, 2098-2113). He even says that if an earthly father acted like the God who sends people to hell “we could contact child protection services immediately” (location 2085-2098). Bell’s god is more akin to New Age panentheism than the God of the Bible. He describes God as “a force, an energy, a being calling out to us in many languages, using a variety of methods and events” (*Love Wins*, location 1710-1724). Bell also worships a false christ. His Jesus is “supracultural ... present within all cultures ... refuses to be co-opted or owned by any one culture ... He doesn’t even state that those coming to the Father through him will even know that they are coming exclusively through him ... there is only one mountain, but many paths. ... People come to Jesus in all sorts of ways ... Sometimes people use his name; other times they don’t” (*Love Wins*, location 1827-1840, 1865-1878, 1918-1933).

The last I checked, LifeWay wasn’t selling Bell’s book *Love Wins*, but they have long distributed his other books such as *Velvet Elvis* and his *Nooma* video series.

John Michael Talbot says God is “the Ultimate Reality” who is known by “pure spiritual intuition ... beyond all thought” (“The Many Paths of Religion and the One God of Faith,” Part 2).

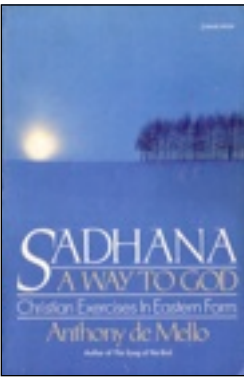
Brennan Manning has exchanged the holy God of Scripture for an idol: “[T]he god whose moods alternate between graciousness and fierce anger ... the god who exacts the last drop of blood from his Son so that his just anger, evoked by sin, may be appeased, is not the God revealed by and in Jesus Christ. And if he is not the God of Jesus, he does not exist” (Brennan Manning, *Above All*, p. 58-59; the foreword to this book is written by CCM artist Michael W. Smith).

Thomas Merton, who is acclaimed widely within evangelicalism, said that to unite with the inner ground of reality “is the will of God, of Krishna, of Providence, of Tao” (*Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*). Merton worshipped Buddhist idols in Sri Lanka.

Sue Monk Kidd took the path of contemplative mysticism from a Southern Baptist church all the way to goddess worship. She writes, “Over the altar in my study I hung a lovely mirror sculpted in the shape of a crescent moon. It reminded me to honor the Divine Feminine presence in myself” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*).

Alan “Bede” Griffiths was a contemplative Catholic priest who adopted Hinduism. He wrote, “I saw God in the earth, in trees, in mountains. It led me to the conviction that there is no absolute good or evil in this world” (1991, <http://www.bedegriffiths.com/bio.htm>).

Many contemplative practitioners have come to believe in the pagan panentheism concept, that God is in everything.



Ken Blanchard is a board member of the Hoffman Institute which holds to the Hindu principle that the universe is one and man is God. “I am you and you are me. We are all parts of the whole. ... When you are open to life, you start noticing the divine in everything” (Tim Laurence, *The Hoffman Process*, pp. 206, 209).

Anthony De Mello, Catholic contemplative, says: “Think of the air as of an immense ocean that surrounds you ... an ocean heavily colored with God’s presence and God’s being. ... While you draw the air into your lungs you are drawing God in” (*Sadhana: A Way to God*, p. 36).

John of the Cross said, “My beloved [God] is the high mountains, and the lovely valley forests, unexplored islands,

rushing rivers” (Timothy Freke, *The Spiritual Canticle: The Wisdom of the Christian Mystics*, p. 60).

Julian of Norwich said, “I saw that God is in all things” (quoted by Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, 1988, p. 123), and, “And I saw no difference between God and our Substance: but as it were all God” (“Julian of Norwich,” Lighthouse Trails Research).

Meister Eckhart said: “Therefore God is free of all things and therefore he is all things.”

Henri Nouwen said: “It is in the heart of God that we can come to the full realization of THE UNITY OF ALL THAT IS” (*Bread for the Journey*, 1997, Jan. 15 and Nov. 16).

Willigis Jager, Catholic contemplative, says, “The physical world, human beings, and everything that is are all forms of the Ultimate Reality, all expressions of God, all ‘one with the Father”” (*Contemplation: A Christian Path*, p. 93).

Wayne Teasdale, Catholic contemplative, said, “You are God; I am God; they are God; it is God” (“The Mystic Heart: The Supreme Identity,” <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7652038071112490301&q=ken+Wilber>).

The Path of Protection: Full-orbed Biblical Separation

There are indeed treacherous waters within the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large. We have documented 21 ancient and end-time heresies that can be found in these waters, and there are many others.

How can a Bible-believing church protect its people?

The only real protection is to obey the biblical practice of separation, and there are two aspects of separation: ecclesiastical (separation from doctrinal error) and separation from the world.

Full-orbed Ecclesiastical Separation

The path of ecclesiastical separation is summarized in Romans 16:17:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

The basis of ecclesiastical separation

We see, first, the basis or standard of separation and that is the doctrine we have learned from the apostles. This is the New Testament faith for which we are to earnestly contend (Jude 3).

The next question is which part of the faith are we to contend for and separate over? The answer is all of it, because Paul does not say to mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to *some of* the doctrine which we have learned.

It is true that this principle is the path of “fragmentation,” and the more widely apostasy spreads the more fragmentation it creates, but it is also true that this is what the Bible plainly teaches and it is the path of spiritual protection.

Those who hold the “in essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty” doctrine cannot show us where this principle was taught by Christ or Paul or any of the apostles. They cannot show from the clear teaching of Scripture how to identify a “non-essential” doctrine, nor can they show how a list of “non-essentials” can keep from growing larger with each generation as it has everywhere this principle has been accepted. At first only things like “music” or “dress” or “Bible versions” are considered “non-essential,” but after a while the list includes things like a woman’s call to preach and the interpretation of prophecy and the definition of God’s sovereignty in election and ecumenical evangelism and definitions of the atonement -- and the list just keeps growing.

The biblical way is to reject the “essentials/non-essentials” philosophy and to respect the whole counsel of the New Testament faith.

“Teaching them to observe ALL THINGS whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, THE SAME commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach NO OTHER doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:3).

“I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment WITHOUT SPOT, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 6:13-14).

Consider 1 Timothy 6:13-14. In the context, Paul is referring to the commandments contained in this epistle, which had to do with church truth, such as qualifications for pastors and deacons (1 Tim. 3), discipline of pastors (1 Tim.

5:19-21), the woman's role in the ministry (1 Tim. 2:12), and the woman's dress (1 Tim. 2:9). These are exactly the types of things that are treated as "non-essentials" today when it comes to fellowship and such. We aren't supposed to make a big deal about such things. Unity is more important, we are told, but this is NOT what the Bible teaches.

This does not mean that we consider all doctrine of equal importance. There are damnable heresies, which only the unregenerate hold, and lesser heresies, which even born again believers hold. But every clearly-taught doctrine of the New Testament faith should be honored and none despised. And we should be willing to defend whatever teaching happens to be under attack at any given time.

That is the basis of biblical separation.

The method of ecclesiastical separation

What, then, is the method of separation? There are two essential parts of biblical separatism. The first is marking and warning, and the second is avoiding.

"... mark them ... and avoid them."

Both are necessary. Marking is just as important as avoiding.

To MARK someone who is committed to error means to identify him. How do we do this? We do it by plain exposure, reproof and warning. If a man is prominent in teaching a certain error or leading a movement that is contrary to God's Word, he should be marked and reproved so that God's people can know exactly who to avoid. This is why I use the names of men like Jack Hyles and Curtis Hutson when warning about Quick Prayerism. They were at the forefront of promoting that great error and redefining biblical repentance, and they were in a position to influence multitudes. I use names such as Billy and Franklin Graham and Luis Palau to illustrate the heresy of ecumenical evangelism. I use the names of Mark Driscoll and Ed Stetzer in warning of the

heresy of “cultural liberalism,” and the names of Rick Warren and Bill Hybels in warning about the church growth movement, and the names of James Dobson and Larry Crabb in warning about the Christian psychology movement. The names that are named are those of men and women who are prominent in the promotion of a certain error.

To mark means to warn plainly about many of the popular authors who are distributed through evangelical bookstores such as LifeWay. This report, which we are publishing without charge at the Way of Life site, provides a lot of information like this.

It means to warn plainly about most of the syndicated Christian radio personalities, (See “Dangers on Christian Radio” at the Way of Life web site.)

It means to have Bible conferences that provide solid education and warning. I thank the Lord that there are still Independent Baptist churches that host such conferences, and I preach in several of these annually.

It means to provide sound literature that can educate and warn the people about the spiritual dangers that they must face today. I urge Bible-believing churches to set up their own bookstores to provide such literature, because typically it will not be found in the commercial Christian bookstores. (The report “Recommended Materials for Church Bookstores” offers suggestions along this line.)

To look upon this type of thing as mere “negativity” is not wise. This is the way of spiritual protection in the midst of end-time apostasy. There is no shortcut. Thinking positively will not make the treacherous waters any safer!

Without such plain warning and education, the Lord’s people are left to drift without a solid anchor and they can easily drift into treacherous waters.

If a church doesn’t want to make “a major issue” of this type of thing and considers it perhaps distasteful or distracting from “more important things,” or even wrong, and

wants to keep the message more on a positive keel, it *will gradually be leavened by error*.

But marking and reproving is not enough.

We must also **AVOID**. That is a simple and powerfully descriptive term.

To avoid those who are committed to error means to stay away from their churches, their Bible studies, their books, their Sunday School materials, their conferences, their schools, their radio and television ministries, and their Internet blogs.

It doesn't mean to hate them; it means to disassociate from them so as not to be affected by the leaven of their error. It means to disassociate from them so as to be the right example to your circle of influence.

This practice is very dramatic and "radical" and "extreme" in our day, but it is exactly what the Bible requires and it is the way of spiritual protection.

This is the way to cut off the leaven of compromise and heresy so that it does not spread through a church.

Full-orbed Separation from the World

The path of separation from the world is summarized in 1 John 2:15-17:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Separation from the world is not a minor matter: it is a major doctrine of God's Word. See John 15:19; 17:14; Romans 12:2; Galatians 6:14; Ephesians 5:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:11-12; James 1:27; 4:4; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 4:1-4; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19; Proverbs 4:14-15.

What Is the World?

It does not refer to the good things in the world that God made (e.g., trees, birds, rivers).

It also does not refer to innocent manmade things. There are things that man has made and there are aspects of human culture that are not contrary to God's Law, and the believer is free to enjoy such things.

The "world" that we are not to love refers to the evil things associated with man's fallen heart -- the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). These can be summarized as all unlawful lusts and pride. The believer is not to love anything pertaining to unlawful lusts and pride.

We can apply the previous points to all areas of life.

Take dancing, for example. There are forms of folk dancing that are innocent and that do not involve moving one's body sexually and are not dedicated to the philosophy of hedonism. This type of dancing is not wrong because it does not pertain to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. But modern rock & roll dancing is characterized by these things and is thus forbidden.

Consider music. There is music that is innocent and that can be enjoyed by the child of God even though it was created by unbelievers, such as some folk and classical music or John Williams' *Liberty Fanfare* or Aaron Copeland's *Rodeo*. Then there is music that is dedicated to sensuality and hedonism, such as the vast majority of modern pop and country music.

Consider clothing. Just because something might be designed and created by unbelievers and just because it might be sold in a store and be attractive doesn't make it wrong. If a certain fashion isn't immodest and doesn't promote the unisex philosophy and doesn't pander to vanity, it isn't wrong and doesn't have to be rejected. But if a fashion is characterized by the lust of the flesh and eyes (if it promotes

sensuality because it is immodest by being skimpy or tight or whatever) and the pride of life it is to be rejected. This standard can be applied to any culture. In Nepal and India, for example, many women wear soirees and kurta sudawals. These fashions can be modest or immodest depending particularly on how they are cut and how tight they are.

Everything must be measured by God's Word as to whether or not it falls into the category of sinful lusts and pride.

The "world" also refers to the world system created by fallen men in rebellion to Almighty God and His Law ("for all that is in the world ... is not of the Father," 1 John 2:16). The world is in open rebellion to God, and each person must make his choice: the world or God (1 John 5:19). The world system began in the days of Cain, when Cain went out from the presence of God and built the first city and civilization (Gen. 4:16-22). It was a glorious civilization full of entertainment and enterprise, but it was a civilization that rejected God's Law and was bent on living without God. The world system was further developed in the days of Nimrod and the building of the Tower of Babel. God had instructed mankind to fill the earth, but instead they congregated in the region of Babel and built a society based on rebellion to God's laws, human pride, and idolatrous religion. This has remained the essence of the world system to this day. The devil is called "the god of this world" because he is the head of the world system (2 Cor. 4:4). The believer who loves the Lord and His Word considers himself a pilgrim in this world and doesn't feel at home. He looks at things differently, marches to a different drummer.

How Should the Believer Relate to the World?

We would emphasize that *biblical separation from the world does not mean isolation*. The early churches described in the book of Acts didn't flee away to mountain caves or build communes and live isolated from society. They lived in the villages and cities in the midst of the pagans and went about

their lives and let their lights shine in a dark world both by gospel preaching and holy living. Biblical separation is not monasticism or communalism.

Further, biblical separation is not antiquation. It is not Amishism or Ludditism (referring to those who resist progress in technology). The believer will be different if he lives according to God's Word, and his dress will be different because it is modest. He doesn't need to adopt a uniform and lock himself into a time warp. Biblically modest dress is not to be equated with a "plain" uniform. The Amish confuse the instrument with its use. A car is not worldly in itself, but it can be used for worldly purposes. Electricity, a cell phone, a video camera, a computer, an iPad, the Internet, an MP3 player, a DVD player, a guitar, a drum--none of these are worldly in themselves. They are worldly when used for sinful purposes. One man wrote to reprove me for supporting the use of eBooks and eReaders such as the Kindle and the iPad. He claimed that these are "worldly," but the worldliness is not in the technology; the worldliness is in the wrong use of the technology for "the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life."

Biblical separation is also not mere externalism. External "standards" without a right internal relationship with Christ is Pharisaism. I know by personal experience that in many independent Baptist circles if an individual conforms externally--if he cuts his hair and wears a tie and uses the right Bible version and goes out "soul-winning"--he is accepted as a godly Christian regardless of whether he mistreats his wife or flirts with his secretary or how much other wickedness he might be involved with. He might even be an adulterer, but as long as he has the externals right he is put right back into the ministry. This is hypocrisy and it is very destructive. I would hasten to add that though an individual can be separated in external things and not be godly, every true godly, Christlike person will be separated from the world.

Biblical separation is also not self-righteousness and standoffish spiritual arrogance. The believer must never forget that he is not better than the unbeliever by nature and that he was not saved because he is special. All men are sinners, and Jesus came because God loves the whole world (John 3:16). The believer has no righteousness except that which he has received as a gift of God's grace. We must not "look down our noses" at the world. The apostle Paul knew this and called himself "the chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). I am so thankful for the way I was treated when I was a long-haired hippy in the 1970s. The man that led me to Christ loved me enough to spend four days traveling with me. And after I was saved, the first church I joined loved me enough to ignore my appearance and to patiently disciple me. They didn't jump on me right away about my hair or my smoking or my movie going. They focused on grounding me in Christ and it wasn't long before the externals began to change. The Bible has principles that apply to hair and smoking and entertainment, but to focus on the externals right away and to make them the really important thing is to put the cart before the horse.

Following are the ways that the believer is to relate to the world:

1. *The believer is not to love the world* (1 John 2:15). Here we see that the believer is not to allow the world to capture his heart and affections and passion. A good test is to ask oneself, "What is it that really gets me excited in life? What am I passionate about?" If the answer pertains to anything that is characterized by the lust of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, then I stand condemned by God's Word.

2. *The believer is not to be conformed to the world* (Romans 12:2). To be conformed means to be pressed into a mold, to be fashioned according to a likeness. The world is very aggressive and evangelistic and enticing. It wants to shape our lives by its standards, its fashions, its forms of entertainment, its principles, its philosophies, its standard of what is cool and

desirable. The child of God must resist this in every area of his life. We must remember that the world does not love us; it is not our friend; and it has no wisdom. To follow the ways of the world is foolish and extremely short sighted. God loves us and God is wisdom, and His ways are right and good and eternal.

3. *The believer is not to be a friend of the world* (James 4:4). Again, the Bible refers to our affections. To be a friend is to have positive, friendly feelings toward someone, to appreciate their company. James uses very powerful words. To befriend the world is to commit spiritual adultery. God is a jealous God. This one verse exposes the error of the emerging church and its “cultural liberalism.” The sermons and writings of emergents are filled with positive references to the evil things of the world, such as R-rated movies and drinking and filthy rock bands. Note the following excerpt from the book *Hipster Christianity*: “Hipsters are ... mavens of cool music. ... They gravitate toward HBO, Showtime, FX, or Comedy Central ... Music is everything to hipsters, so of course they love going to concerts. ... Christian hipsters love breaking the taboos ... piercings, dressing a little goth, getting lots of tattoos, carrying flasks, and smoking cloves. ... Mark Driscoll liberally embraces the sorts of vices--drinking, dancing, R-rated movies, and UFC fights--that old-school Christians ardently avoid.” If this is not what it means to be a friend of the world, I don’t know what the term could mean.

How Strict Should Our Separation Be?

The popular thinking is that there should be *some* basic separation from the world, but we shouldn’t be very strict and “legalistic” about it. Consider the following Scriptures which refute this:

“And have NO FELLOWSHIP with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

To have *no* fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness is a very, very strict standard of separation. If I apply this to music, I will not associate with any type of music that presents any form of darkness. This requires the rejection of the vast majority of pop and country music.

“Abstain from ALL appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Again, this is the strictest possible standard. We are to abstain not only from evil but from the very appearance of evil. This requires the rejection of fashions that might not be immodest or unisex but that give the appearance of evil, such as Goth or HipHop fashions that would identify the wearer with those evils.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself UNSPOTTED from the world” (James 1:27).

Again, to keep oneself unspotted from the world is the highest possible standard. A spot is a small thing.

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy IN ALL MANNER OF CONVERSATION” (1 Peter 1:14-15).

To strive to be holy in all manner of conversation encompasses every aspect of one’s life. God’s will is for the believer to test *everything* by His holy Word to see if it is acceptable. This is a very cautious, strict way of Christian living. It is contrary to the easy-going Christian rock philosophy that focuses more on liberty than holiness, that tries to get as close to the world as possible.

Is There a Positive Side to Separation?

Consider 2 Timothy 2:22, which teaches that separation is not just a “negative” issue.

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

1. Separation is a matter of spiritual and moral protection.

Timothy was told to “flee also youthful lusts.” That is the image of running from some great danger. God does not want to take pleasurable things away from His people. He is the Author of every good gift (James 1:17). When He made Adam and Eve, He put them in the loveliest Garden one could imagine. He designed it to provide every wonderful and pleasurable thing. God is not some cruel person who wants to harass people with meaningless laws. God is the most compassionate, giving person in existence. His command to separate from the evil things of the world is designed to protect us from spiritual and moral harm. It is designed to keep us out of the devil’s cruel clutches.

2. Separation is an association matter.

Timothy was to pursue holiness “with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” This reminds us that one’s associations have a great influence on one’s life. 1 Corinthians 15:33 warns that “evil communications corrupt good manners.” If you run with the wrong crowd, you will not live a godly life. That is a law. A good apple will always be corrupted if placed in a barrel of rotten ones.

3. Separation is a heart matter.

Paul mentioned “a pure heart.” If the heart is right, the believer will respond positively to the Lord’s command to separate from evil. Before I was saved, I grew my hair long as a flag of rebellion and pride. I refused to cut it for love or money, but after I was saved I cut it when I was challenged by an elderly woman that long hair was not befitting a young man who claims to be a follower of Christ. I cut it because my heart was right with God and I wanted to do His will instead of my own, and I did not want to offend people.

4. Separation is a replacement matter.

Timothy was instructed not only to flee from sinful things but also to “follow” godly things. It is not enough to give up sensual music and worldly fashions and friends that hinder one’s spiritual walk; the child of God must *add* godly friends and sacred music and edifying literature and wholesome activities and get busy in the service of Christ.

Some Final Points on Separation

Is separation legalism?

No, Titus 2:11-15 plainly states that the true grace of God leads men to strict, holy, separated Christian living. It is not legalism for a born again child of God to seek to obey God’s rules that are laid out in the New Testament faith.

Is separation selfish?

No, separation is wisdom (1 Peter 5:8). To avoid the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life is the way of protection from the devil and is the way to avoid becoming a slave to sin.

Is separation unchristlike?

No, Christ was holy and separated from sin at all times (Heb. 7:26). He was a friend of sinners, but He was never a friend of sin. The emerging church describes Jesus almost as a cool party guy, but He was not. He warned about judgment and preached about hell even in private situations, and that is a sure-fire way to end a party! When the woman was caught in the act of adultery and brought to Him, He forgave her by His marvelous grace but he also instructed her to “sin no more.” That is a very strict standard and would put a damper on any worldly party!

Why is separation so unpopular?

It is unpopular because we live in the time prophesied in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, when professing Christians will create a new type of Christianity that allows them to live according to their own lusts.

Frightful Examples of Shipwrecks in the Treacherous Waters of Evangelicalism

The following are four examples of what can happen when the walls of biblical separation are broken down and professing believers move into the treacherous waters of evangelicalism.

Sue Monk Kidd

Consider the case of Sue Monk Kidd.

Her story is loud warning about the treacherous waters that exist in the Southern Baptist Convention today.

Kidd is a very popular writer. Her first two novels, *The Secret Life of Bees* (2002) and *The Mermaid Chair* (2005), have sold more than 6 million copies.



She was raised in a Southern Baptist congregation in southwest Georgia. Her grandfather and father were Baptist deacons. Her grandmother gave devotionals at the Women's Missionary Union, and her mother was a Sunday School teacher. Her husband was a minister who taught religion and a chaplain at a Baptist college. She was very involved in church, teaching Sunday School and attending services Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday. She was even inducted into a group of women called the Gracious Ladies, the criterion for which was that "one needed to portray certain ideals of womanhood, which included being gracious and giving of oneself unselfishly."

When Kidd was 30, a Sunday School co-worker gave her a book by Thomas Merton. Feeling “spiritually empty” she decided to read the book.

She should have known better and should have been warned by her brethren, but the New Evangelical philosophy has created an atmosphere in which the reading of a Catholic monk’s book by a Southern Baptist Sunday School teacher is acceptable in a large number of churches.

Kidd began to practice Catholic forms of contemplative spirituality, read the “church fathers,” and visit Catholic retreat centers and monasteries. In addition to Merton she read John of the Cross, Augustine, Bernard, Bonaventure, Ignatius of Loyola, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and others.

Merton communicated intimately with and was deeply affected by Mary veneration, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sufism, so it is not surprising that his writings would create an appetite that could lead to Kidd all the way to goddess worship.

In *The New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton made the following frightening statement that shows the great danger of Catholic mysticism:

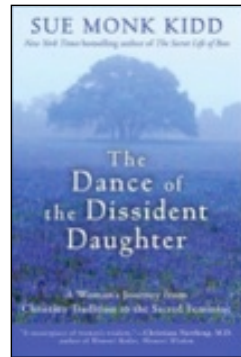
“In the end the contemplative suffers the anguish of realizing that HE NO LONGER KNOWS WHAT GOD IS. He may or may not mercifully realize that, after all, this is a great gain, because ‘God is not a what,’ not a ‘thing.’ This is precisely one of the essential characteristics of contemplative experience. It sees that there is no ‘what’ that can be called God” (p. 13).

What Catholic mysticism does is reject the Bible as the sole and sufficient and perfect revelation of God and tries to delve beyond the Bible, even beyond conscious thought, to find God through mystical “intuition” or “love.” It says that God cannot be known perfectly by doctrine and cannot be described in words. He must be *experienced* through mysticism.

And this opens the practitioner to demonic delusion.

The involvement in Catholic contemplative practices led Kidd farther and farther from the truth. She accepted the mass and other sacramental practices. There is an occultic power in the mass that has influenced many who have approached it in a non-critical manner.

She learned dream analysis from a Jungian perspective and believed that her dreams were revelations. One recurring dream featured an old woman. Kidd concluded that this is “the Feminine Self or the voice of the feminine soul” and she was encouraged in her feminist studies by these visitations.



She determined to stop testing things and follow her heart (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 140), rejecting the Bible’s admonition to “prove all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). In church one day the pastor proclaimed that the Bible is the sole authority for truth, and she describes the frightful thing that happened in her heart at that moment:

“I remember a feeling rising up from a place about two inches below my navel. ... It was the purest inner knowing I had experienced, and it was shouting in me no, no, no! The ultimate authority of my life is not the Bible; it is not confined between the covers of a book. It is not something written by men and frozen in time. It is not from a source outside myself. My ultimate authority is the divine voice in my own soul. Period. ... That day sitting in church, I believed the voice in my belly. ... The voice in my belly was the voice of the wise old woman. It was my female soul talking. And it had challenged the assumption that the Baptist Church would get me where I needed to go” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, pp. 76, 77, 78).

Kidd’s “pure form of knowing” was a demonic lie.

She traveled with a group of women to Crete where they met in a cave and sang prayers to “the Goddess Skoteini, Goddess of the Dark.”

She finally came to the place where she believed that she is a goddess herself. “To embrace Goddess is simply to discover the Divine in yourself as powerfully and vividly feminine” (p. 141).

She built an altar in her study and populated it with statues of goddesses, an image of Jesus, a Black Madonna -- and a mirror to reflect her own image so she could “honor the Divine Feminine presence in myself, the wisdom in my own soul” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 181).

Kidd’s daughter, too, has accepted goddess worship through her mother’s influence.

In spite of her complete apostasy, Sue Monk Kidd is quoted by evangelicals such as David Jeremiah (*Life Wide Open*), Beth Moore (*When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*), and Richard Foster (*Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*). Kidd’s endorsement is printed on the back of Dallas Willard’s book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. She wrote the foreword to the 2006 edition of Henri Nouwen’s *With Open Hands* and the introduction to Thomas Merton’s *New Seeds of Contemplation*.

Dallas Willard

Consider the case of Dallas Willard.

Willard is a philosophy professor who has had an influence on the emerging church and evangelicalism at large through his writings on contemplative spirituality and the kingdom of God.

He is a professor in the philosophy department at the University of Southern California and is also an ordained Southern Baptist minister.

Willard attended Tennessee Temple College in the 1950s when it was still in the SBC (he graduated a few months after Highland Park Baptist Church left the Convention).



Willard was led astray by philosophy. In his book *The Divine Conspiracy*, Willard describes how that as a young assistant pastor in a Southern Baptist church he was convinced that he was ignorant of God and the soul, so he decided to study philosophy, of all things -- ignoring the divine warning: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). He disobeyed the command of Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14, etc., and sat at the feet of unbelievers and heretics.

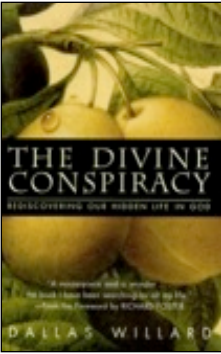
Willard has also been deeply influenced by contemplative spirituality. His books *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, *Hearing God*, and *Renovation of the Heart* deal with this theme.

He recommends the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton and many other Roman Catholic mystics. He has been associated with Richard Foster since he attended Foster’s Quaker church in California in the 1970s. Willard was the song leader and sometimes a teacher in the church and his wife played the organ. Foster is the most influential promoter of Catholic contemplative mysticism alive today.

Willard’s extensive journey into the depths of philosophy and contemplative mysticism has corrupted his thinking, just

as the Bible warns: “*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*” (1 Cor. 15:33).

Today he rejects the infallible inspiration of Scripture, saying, “Jesus and his words have never belonged to the categories of dogma or law, and to read them as if they did is simply to miss them” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. xiii).



Willard is confused about salvation itself. He asks: “Why is it that we look upon salvation as a moment that began our religious life instead of the daily life we receive from God?” (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*). The biblical answer to this question is that Jesus described salvation as a new birth, and a birth is not a lifelong process.

Willard has even come to believe that there can be salvation apart from faith in Christ. In 2001 he said, “It is possible for someone who does not know Jesus to be saved” (“Apologetics in Action,” *Cutting Edge* magazine, winter 2001, vol. 5 no. 1, Vineyard USA, <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=14>).

Willard calls the traditional Bible doctrine of substitutionary atonement a “theory” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 42).

Willard is a radical ecumenist. As a Ministry Team member with Richard Foster’s Renovaré organization, he would agree with Foster’s ecumenical vision: “I see a Catholic monk from the hills of Kentucky standing alongside a Baptist evangelist from the streets of Los Angeles and together offering up a sacrifice of praise” (*Streams of Living Water*, 1998, p. 274).

Like many others swimming in the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism, Willard has not merely lost faith in traditional Bible doctrine, he has rejected the God of holy wrath and capitulated to the idol represented in *The Shack*.

He believes it is wrong to see God as “a policeman on the prowl” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 64). He rejects the idea that God hates or that God “in a moment of rage” will destroy the earth (p. 267). He says that the true idea of God is that He is only loveable. “The acid test for any theology is this: ... If it fails to set a lovable God--a radiant, happy, friendly, accessible, and totally competent being--before ordinary people, we have gone wrong” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 329). In light of the following Scriptures, it is obvious that Willard has rejected the God of the Bible: Psalm 2:12; 7:11; 50:3; Isaiah 66:15-16; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 1:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; Hebrews 10:26-27; 12:29.

John Michael Talbot

Consider the case of John Michael Talbot.

After a questionable conversion experience in 1971 (supposedly seeing Jesus and reaffirming a childhood Methodist profession of faith), he turned in a “fundamentalist direction” and became a “Bible thumper.” In his autobiography *Troubadour for the Lord*, Talbot says that he became very skeptical of any other religion and was ready with a Scripture for any question or problem. He even considered the Catholic Church “the great whore of Babylon.” He says that when he visited friends he would “come on like a Bible thumper, condemning their life-styles and spitting out Scripture verses to make my point” (*Troubadour for the Lord*, p. 63). Talbot says



John Michael Talbot

that during those days he talked Catholics out of their church and “convinced them they couldn’t really be saved in the Catholic church with all that idol worship and repeated ritual.”

Gradually, though, he was influenced in a different direction and he began to see a thorough-going biblical approach as “unloving.”

He claims that he “was becoming more centered on that book than on Jesus” and “was unwittingly committing the sin of bibliolatry” (*Troubadour for the Lord*, p. 65).

We don’t know what was going on in his heart, but it is impossible to walk with Christ properly without making the Bible central to one’s Christian life. This is not bibliolatry; it is obedience. Fundamentalists don’t worship the Bible; they worship God; but they honor the Bible for what it claims to be, the very Word of God. The Lord Jesus said, “*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:31-32), and, “*He that is of God heareth God’s words*” (John 8:47), and, “*My sheep hear my voice*” (John 10:27), and, “*I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them*” (John 17:8).

After his wife divorced him, he counseled with a preacher in the liberal American Baptist Church and was influenced to soften his zeal to become more “moderate,” “balanced,” and “tolerant.”

He entered the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism.

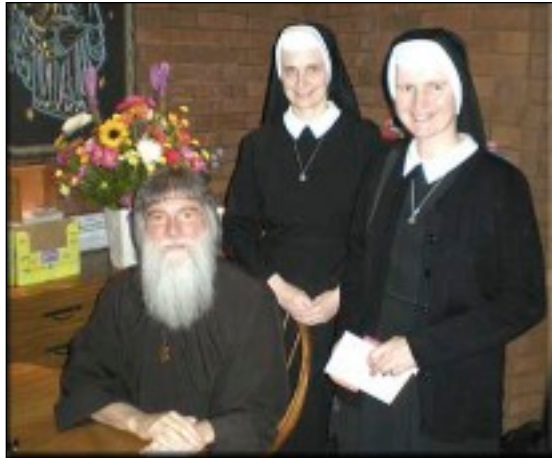
There he became immersed in the contemporary Christian music world, which further tempered his Biblicist enthusiasm. Contemporary Christian Music has always had a downplay-doctrine, ecumenical outlook. Talbot signed with Billy Ray Hearn’s new label, Sparrow Records. CCM’s radical ecumenical philosophy is evident by the fact that when Talbot eventually converted to Catholicism and wanted to

continue recording albums under Sparrow, Hearn was totally supportive (*Troubadour for the Lord*, p. 114).

In those treacherous waters Talbot also encountered contemplative mysticism, which became a bridge to Rome. He was receptive when the road manager of his band gave him a book about Francis of Assisi. This set him on the path to Roman Catholicism, mysticism, and interfaith dialogue. He read Thomas Merton, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Bernard of Clairvaux, the *Cloud of Unknowing*, and other Catholic mystical writings.

He began meeting with a Catholic priest named Martin Wolter at Alverna, a Franciscan retreat center in Indianapolis (now defunct).

In 1978, he joined the Roman Catholic Church, and within a year his parents followed. Talbot claims that God spoke to him and said: “She is my first Church, and I



love her most dearly. But she has been sick and nearly died, but I am going to heal her and raise her to new life, and I want you to be a part of her” (*Come to the Quiet*, p. 7).

Obviously this was a deluding spirit, because the first churches described in the Bible were nothing like the Roman Catholic Church. Peter was married. He did not operate as a pope. He didn’t sit on a throne or wear special clothes and lord it over his brethren. In the early churches described in the New Testament there was no special ordained priesthood, no ceremony like the Mass, no host, no monstrance, no bells,

no incense, no tabernacle, no prayers to Mary, no special sainthood, no purgatory, no cardinals, no archbishops, no infant baptism, no holy relics.

After joining the Catholic Church, Talbot claims that he had a powerful mystical experience on the feast day of Mary's (mythical) assumption into heaven. He was walking by the Shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes with its statue of Mary and felt called to build a little shack nearby so that he could enter contemplative solitude. In 1984, Talbot said, "I am also feeling the presence of Mary becoming important in my life. ... I feel that she really does love me and intercedes to God on my behalf" (*Contemporary Christian Music Magazine*, November 1984, p. 47). This is a deluding spirit, and Talbot was deceived by it because he rejected the Bible as the sole authority and failed to test everything by it.

Talbot and his music have become a bridge to Rome.

His "early albums presented a conservative, Protestant theology," but when he began to study Catholicism, he thought of giving up his music. A Catholic priest counseled him to reconsider, saying, "I think God has chosen you as A BRIDGE BUILDER..." (*Troubadour for the Lord*, p. 90).

Ever since, he has used his music as a bridge between Catholicism and Protestantism. Surveys have shown that 60 percent of Talbot's listeners are non-Catholic. Referring to the mixed crowds who attended his concerts in Catholic churches, Talbot said that he delights to see Protestants who never would have darkened the doorstep of a Catholic church.

"All of a sudden they say, 'Hey, I feel very much at home here. That doesn't mean necessarily I want to be a Roman Catholic, but I feel very much at home worshipping God with other people who are not that different from me'" (John Talbot, quoted in "Interfaith Album Strikes Sour Note," Peter Smith, Religious News Service, Dec. 8, 1996).

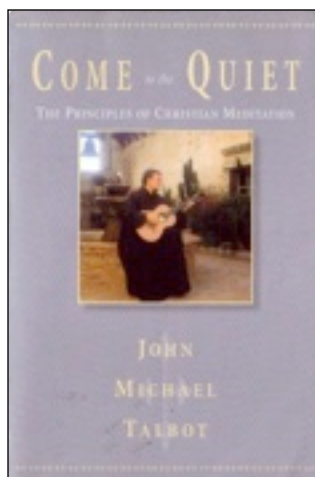
Talbot has continued to move ever farther from the New Testament faith toward out-and-out New Age thought and practice. He integrates Tai Chi, Hindu yoga, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism with Catholic contemplative practices (Talbot, *Come to the Quiet*, pp. 8, 237).

Talbot's contemplative mysticism confirmed him in the heresies of Rome and in his communion with Mary. It also confirmed to him that salvation can be found in pagan religions and taught him that men of all religions are "brothers and sisters."

It led him to the false god of end-time mysticism. Now he calls God "the Ultimate Reality," and he believes that this Reality can be known by "pure spiritual intuition ... beyond all thought" (Talbot, "The Many Paths of Religion, and the One God of Faith" Part 2).

This is a pagan concept of God. The born again believer in Jesus Christ does not experience the same spiritual "Reality" as those who are not born again. And the born again Bible believer does not try to encounter God apart from thinking and concepts. Our knowledge of God is taught in the Scripture, and apart from this divine revelation we know nothing certain about God. What Talbot is describing is blind pagan mysticism.

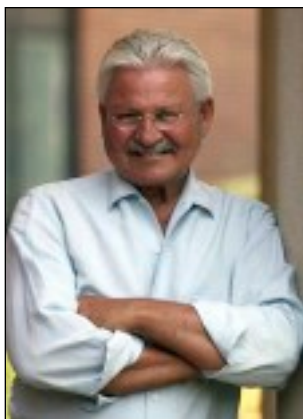
John Michael Talbot became spiritually shipwrecked in the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism. He was influenced by dangerous people who have a home in those waters: ecumenists, compromised wrong-thinking Baptists, contemplative Quakers, Catholics, Christian rockers, the church fathers, and others.



Robert Webber

Consider Robert Webber (d. 2007).

Webber grew up a fundamental Baptist, but by rejecting biblical separation he entered the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism and became shipwrecked.



Step by misguided step he was led away from a solid biblical faith into the broader Christian world with all of its heresies and fables.

Webber's father, who was born in 1900, was involved in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and was a separatist. He left the liberal American Baptist Convention and joined the Conservative Baptists. Webber's parents were missionaries in Africa for the first seven years of his life.

The family moved back to the States when one of the children became seriously ill, and the father pastored Montgomeryville Baptist Church, located about 25 miles west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After high school Webber attended Bob Jones University.

One thing that is missing in the autobiographical account of his youth is a biblical testimony of salvation. Webber admitted that he didn't have a dramatic conversion experience, and he eventually came to see salvation as a sacramental process that begins at baptism.

While at Bob Jones University, he rejected the doctrine of separation. This was the dramatic event that launched him into the broad and treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism. He describes how that at BJU he heard the statement that "Billy Graham is the greatest tool of the devil in the twentieth century" (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 70). They warned that Graham was flirting with

modernism and compromising the gospel through cooperative evangelism, which is absolutely true, but Webber rejected that argument in his heart. He mischaracterized separation from Billy Graham as “second degree separation.” In fact, it is not *second* degree but *first*! The Bible warns God’s people to “*mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*” (Romans 16:17). That is exactly what Billy Graham has done throughout his ecumenical career. He has taught a generation of evangelicals to downplay doctrine and to fellowship with heretics, and that is directly contrary to the doctrine that we learned from the apostles. Paul exalted doctrine and taught us to be very strict about it (1 Timothy 1:3) and he condemned heretics in the boldest, plainest manner (e.g., 1 Timothy 1:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:16-18).

Leaving Bob Jones, Webber launched his boat into the broad and treacherous waters.

There he encountered the “church fathers,” and this was a major step in his journey toward the adoption of ancient and end-time heresies. In reality, most of the so-called church fathers of the early centuries were tainted with heresies such as sacramentalism, sanctification through asceticism, infant baptism, sacerdotalism (priestcraft), hierarchicalism, inquisitionism, and Mariolatry. They represent a gradual falling away from the apostolic faith and a preparation for the formation of the Roman Catholic Church. (See the article “Who Are the Church Fathers” at the Way of Life web site.)

Webber said that he stopped looking back on church history in a “judgmental manner” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, pp. 61, 62). That was a great error, because the Bible says we are to “prove all things” (1 Thess. 5:21).

Another turning point in Webber’s life occurred in 1965 when he attended an ecumenical prayer community, invited by one of his seminary professors. Benedictine monks, laden down with ancient heresies, formed half of the group. Instead of obeying Romans 16:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:33 and many

other Scriptures, Webber agreed to attend. He says, “As time went on my prejudices against the Roman Catholics began to fall by the wayside. I had encountered real people who were deeply committed to Christ” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 64). Dedicated Roman Catholics are obviously real people who are committed to Christ, but what Christ? Rome teaches that the consecrated wafer is Christ, and it does not obey the faith that Christ communicated in Scripture.

By 1972, Webber was preaching a sermon at Wheaton College entitled “The Tragedy of the Reformation.”

At a Catholic retreat center he attended a mass where he had a life-changing mystical experience (*Signs and Wonders*, 1992, p. 5). At another mass at St. Michael’s Church in Wheaton, Webber said he experienced “something deeper than anything else I had been through” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 39).

The mass is at the heart of Rome’s occultic mysticism, and many converts to and sympathizers with Rome have testified that the mass had a part in breaking down their resistance.

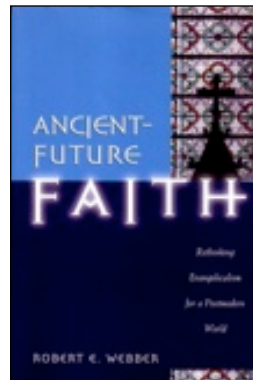
Webber developed a craving for sacramentalism. He says: “I felt a need for visible and tangible symbols that I could touch, feel, and experience with my senses. This need is met in the reality of Christ presented to me through the sacraments” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 15).

Instead of being satisfied with faith in God’s Word, Webber wanted signs and symbols. He wanted a physical experience, which is the error that is at the heart of the contemporary worship movement. The Bible says, “*For we walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith is the “*evidence of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1), and comes by God’s Word through experiences and sight (Romans 10:17).

Another thing that Webber encountered in the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism was contemplative mysticism, and this proved to be a great change agent in his life. He adopted such things as centering prayer and the Jesus

Prayer. He recommended resting the chin on the chest and gazing at the area of the heart and repeating the Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”) “again and again.” He says, “I feel the presence of Christ through this prayer” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 83). Mysticism is an attempt to experience God, and it is never satisfied with a faith walk based on God’s Word. Christ forbade repetitious prayers (Matthew 6:7-8). When we go beyond the Bible and adopt practices that are contrary to Scripture, the devil is always ready to meet us in his guise as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

In *Ancient-Future Faith* (1999), Webber recommended the contemplative writings of the Catholic mystics, including Bernard of Clairvaux, Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Thomas Aquinas, and the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton.



Eventually Webber came to the place where he was no longer satisfied with the doctrine that the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. He was no longer satisfied with a faith walk with Christ based on Scripture. He wanted an experience that went beyond this. He had been led astray through ecumenism and sacramentalism and contemplative spirituality. He came to believe that we don’t need answers *about* God, but God himself. But how can we possibly know God apart from the revelation He has given in Scripture? Anything beyond that is blind mysticism rather than biblical faith. We need sound doctrine based on the Bible, *and* we need a living walk with God through Christ based on that doctrine. Countless Bible believers have found deep satisfaction and a fruitful spirituality in this. To set the one against the other is heresy and apostasy.

God has not revealed Himself in silence; He has revealed Himself in the Bible. We are to meditate on His Word day and night (Psalm 1:2). We are to walk in fellowship with Him by praying without ceasing. Christ taught His disciples to pray by saying words, not by sitting in silence. In his epistles Paul described many of his prayers for an example to us, and they were always prayers of words. God is known by His own infallible revelation, and biblical faith is believing that revelation and knowing God through that revelation.

To accept the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice is not enslavement; it is freedom from deception. It is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

By rejecting Biblical separation Robert Webber's boat was set adrift in the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism and he was spiritually shipwrecked.

Conclusion

These frightful testimonies could be multiplied almost endlessly. Countless people have become shipwrecked in the treacherous waters of the Southern Baptist Convention and the "broader evangelical church."

Those who refuse to draw strict lines and raise up high walls against the Convention and who are soft in reproving and warning and careless in associations, are forming bridges to these treacherous waters and will answer to God for those souls who cross the bridges and become shipwrecked.

God forbids His people to associate with heretical and pagan things such as meditation practices and labyrinths and monks and monasteries and Mary worship and the Mass. To fail to tear down the idols and high places is an exceedingly serious matter.

"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen..." (Jeremiah 10:2).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

“And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:15-17).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:5).

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 3:3-4).

I wish the things described in this report were only a Southern Baptist problem. I wish the heresies and fables and high places were not an Independent Baptist problem, but an ever-increasing number of bridges are being built between Independent Baptist churches and the Convention, and the influence of the SBC's heresies and high places is bleeding over on many fronts.

This is very sad to me because I was glad to find a haven from the SBC's treacherous waters four decades ago. I grew up in the Convention and made a typically empty profession of faith as a kid (I'm probably still on the membership rolls at that church), but when I was born again at age 23, I looked

for a church that took the Bible more seriously, and I found one in a storefront Independent Baptist church in central Florida that was only a year or two old then.

They were separatists! They believed in modest dressing and hated rock & roll and exposed the liberalism and compromise of the SBC and even criticized the Today's English Version that the SBC was distributing in those days. They were "radical extremists." And I loved it. I knew I had found some people who took the Bible more seriously than most do today. They were also gracious, compassionate Christian people who loved me and helped me even though I was still a "long hair" and was really messed up by the druggie lifestyle I had lived.

I turned my back on the deeply compromised Southern Baptist Convention and its theological liberalism and ecumenical Billy Graham evangelism and rock & roll youth groups and unqualified deacons and Smorgasbord Bible philosophy and Freemason pastors and women teachers of mixed adult SS classes and refusal to practice church discipline.....

Some of my Southern Baptist relatives thought I had fallen in with a cult, but to hold the Bible as one's sole authority for faith and practice and to have a zeal to "hate every false way" is not a cultic principle (Psalm 119:128).

Let's stay in the Book and stay out of the treacherous waters!

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